Simon Mignolet interview | Best goals of the year | Anfield's Dream Scene | Win the official LFC 125 book

LIVERPOOL FC

Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine liverpoolfc.com



MANE CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

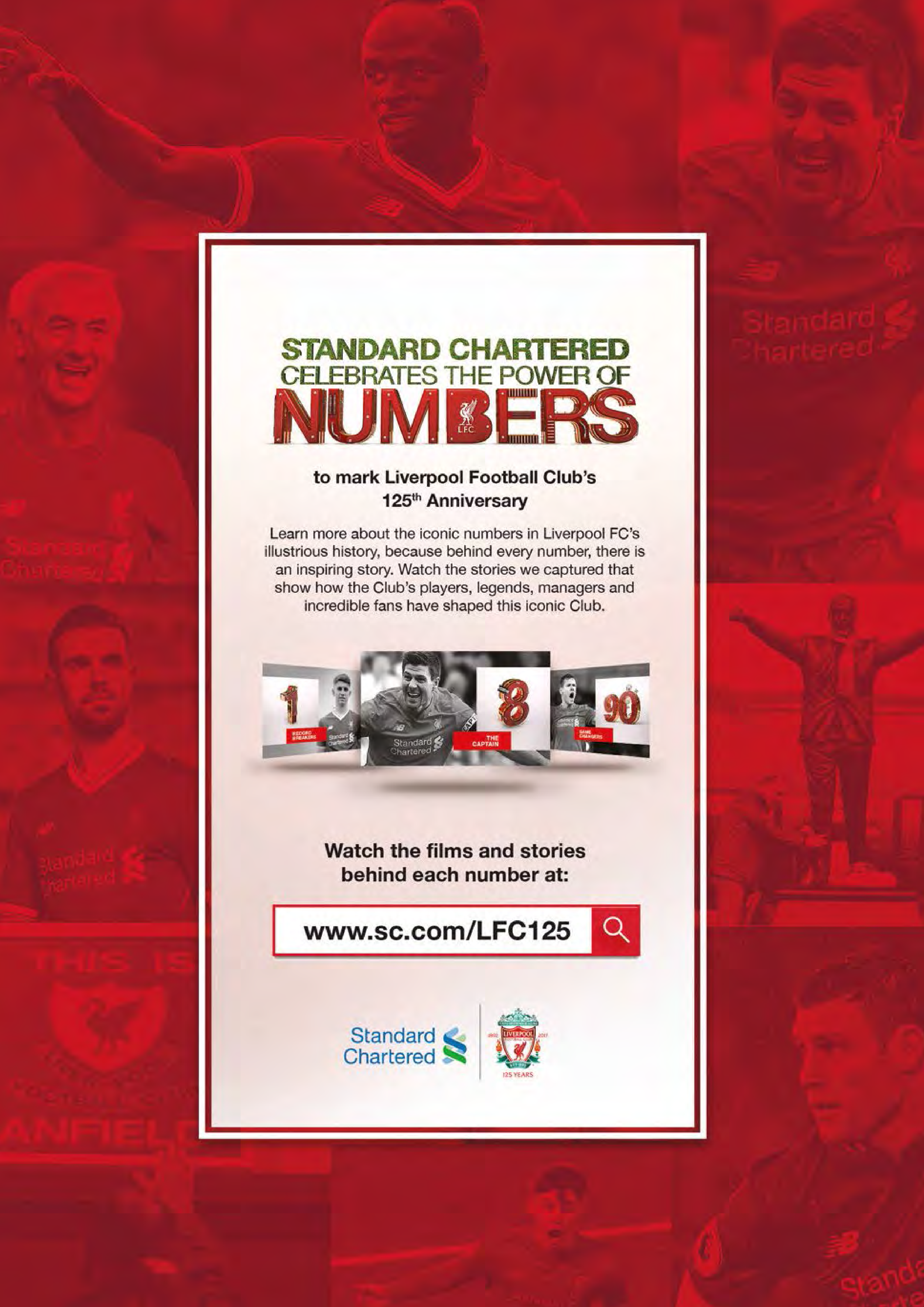
KOPITES SINGING
HAVING FUN
IT'S THE ISSUE
PACKED WITH
LOADS OF GOODIES
FROM SALAH'S
GOAL STATS
TO HENDERSON!











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1
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125 YEARS

ISSUE 65 JANUARY 2018

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Mighty Red looks happy and we hope you will be too with this issue packed with brilliant goals and exclusive interviews with your favourite Reds stars

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FOOTBALL

The stuff that happens on the pitch: exclusive interviews with current stars, the stats that matter plus blasts from the past

CLUB

Reaching out to communities at home and abroad, plus Anfield updates and the latest awesome official merchandise



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AN L4 EVENING Anfield, as viewed from the behind the Kop touchline during the Premier League match with Southampton in November, as the skies darken during the second half. It was in the manager's words "a perfect day" as the Reds secured three Premier League wins in a row for



the first time in 2017 following an impressive performance. Mo Salah maintained his flying start to the season with two first-half goals, curling a beauty into the top corner before flicking home a second after a pass by Philippe Coutinho, and the Brazilian added a third after the break.



SOUTH COAST SENSATIONS Philippe Coutinho is congratulated by Roberto Firmino, skipper Jordan Henderson and Andy Robertson after one of his 'two' goals in the 5-1 win at Brighton & Hove Albion. The result moved Liverpool into the top four of the Premier League for the first time since



August after making it 15 goals in their past four away games in all competitions. The boss: "It looks like we are flying [but] we have to work really hard. I'm much more interested in the next game. We need the points – we want to stay as close as possible to the teams in front of us."

ISTMAS * LIVERPOOL FC * MERRY CHRISTMAS * LIVERPOOL FC * MERRY CHRISTMAS * LIVERPOOL FC * MERRY CHR



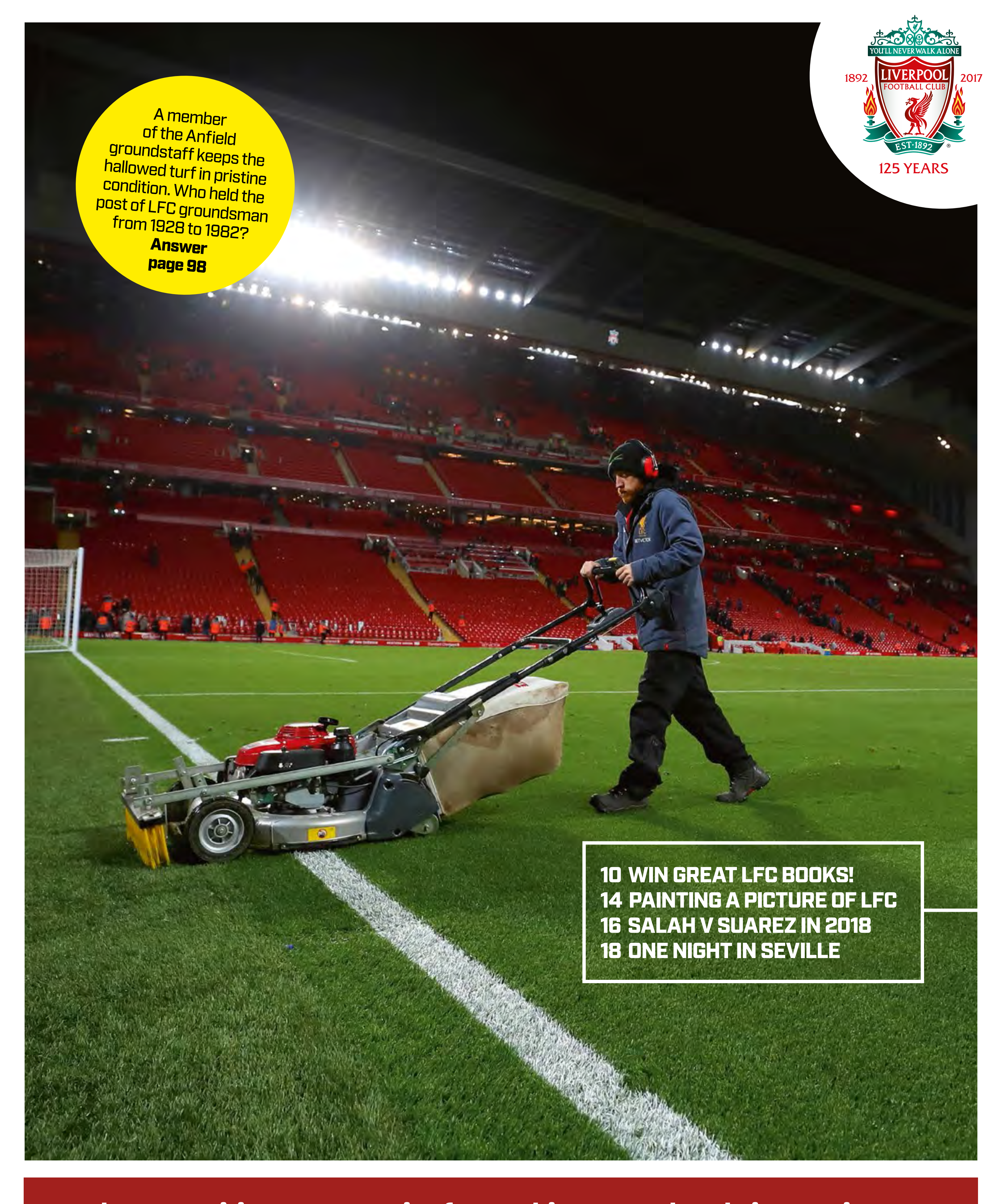
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When you spend £50 in store during December

*Gift card valid from 01/01/18



ISTMAS * LIVERPOOL FC * MERRY CHRISTMAS * LIVERPOOL FC * MERRY CHRISTMAS * LIVERPOOL FC * MERRY CHR



Fab competitions, a portrait of LFC's history and Reds in Russia 2018

LIVERPOOL

WIN OFFICIAL LFC BOOKS!

We've got five pairs of two brilliant new LFC books to give away this Christmas

Two new official Liverpool FC books have been published just in time for Christmas and we can guarantee both are worth asking Santa Claus for because we've written them!

LFC 125: The Alternative History does exactly what it says on the cover – tells the story of 125 years of Liverpool FC's history in a unique style from different perspectives – and you can probably guess what *The Anfield Songbook* is all about too.

First published in 2010 and updated for 2017 to include all the latest Kop songs about Mo Salah, Sadio Mane, Gini Wijnaldum and co, it's essentially a hymnbook for Liverpool supporters containing hundreds of songs and chants that have rung around Anfield and across Europe over the decades.

Not only does *The Anfield Songbook* feature the words from the songs you know, such as *Fields of Anfield Road*, *We Are Liverpool* and *You'll Never Walk Alone* – plus some of those you might be a little sketchy on, like *Liver Bird Upon My Chest* and *Every Other Saturday* – it also reveals many of the stories behind how they became Kop anthems in the first place.

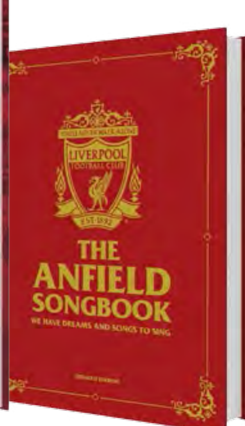
Scores of Kopites' most humorous chants, official cup-final songs and some that have only ever made it to the pubs and social media are also included in this 224-page (we've got a lot of songs!) hardback book. Hello, perfect stocking-filler.

Twice the size at 464-pages is *LFC 125: The Alternative History* – a collection of memories, moments, facts and tales from the last century-and-a-quarter of life at Anfield told from different angles and viewpoints.

From John Houlding to Jürgen Klopp, all the legendary LFC figures are featured but so too are some of the club's lesser-known figures with various quirky occurrences, unusual happenings and strange situations having the spotlight shone upon them over the course of 125 non-chronological, varied chapters. If you want to keep the Kopite in your life









busy over the festive period so you can get first dibs on the telly then here's your chance, but get your order in quick!

Of course Christmas is the time of year for giving and as we're feeling rather generous we're giving **FIVE** lucky readers the opportunity to win both books.

To be in with a chance of winning simply answer the following question and email your answer and contact details (including postal address) with LFC Books Competition in the subject line to **liverpoolfcmag @trinitymirror.com**.

WHICH OF THESE PLAYERS FEATURES IN THE SONG THE FIELDS OF ANFIELD ROAD?
(a) Stevie Nicol (b) Stevie Finnan (c) Stevie Heighway

Good luck! Closing date is Friday 5 January 2018. Winners will be notified by email and will receive one copy of both books. Normal T&C's apply.

■ **LFC 125: The Alternative History (RRP £20.00) and The Anfield Songbook (RRP £9.99) are available in club stores or by visiting store. liverpoolfc.com.**

■ **The winners of the PES competition were D Geoghegan (Netherley) and D Gant (Formby)**

Reds ON INSTAGRAM

The best Liverpool-related posts, featuring Jordan, Stevie, Phil and co



@stevengerrard Couch duty 😍



@jhenderson "And he could play..." 🙌 Privilege to be invited to the premiere of 'Kenny' last night. A must watch for ANY football fan 👑 Kenny 🔴



@liverpoolhearts
Stop the press: Klopp has signed a new goalkeeping coach! (About time, says Grobbelaar). #lfc #goalielife #goalkeeper #liverpoolfc #klopp #humor #grobbelaar



@phil.coutinho Great performance from the team! Well done guys 🔴🙏



@liverpoolfc
Great weekend in the @amplfc18 household. Congratualtions 🙌



@perrieedwards 🖤

A LASTING TRIBUTE

Hillsborough survivors are commemorated at a new site in the city supported by Anne's family



Danny with Sara at the unveiling

A commemorative plaque in tribute to the survivors of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster has been unveiled at Liverpool Central Station.

The permanent tribute, donated by the family of the late Anne Williams – a prominent Hillsborough campaigner – was revealed at a ceremony attended by Mayor of Liverpool Steve Rotheram MP.

While it is well-documented that 96 Liverpool supporters were unlawfully killed on 15 April 1989 before the FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest, it is less well-known that 766 people were officially recorded as having suffered physical injuries as a result of crushing on the Leppings Lane terrace at Sheffield Wednesday's ground. Many more also suffered mental trauma following Britain's worst sporting disaster.

The plaque was commission by Danny Gordon, brother of Formby mum Anne who campaigned relentlessly to uncover the truth about her 15-year-old son Kevin who died at Hillsborough.

Anne, who passed away aged 62 in April 2013, was posthumously recognised for her tireless work when she was awarded the Helen Rollason Award at the 2013 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards and her family, including daughter Sara, were keen to pay tribute to the Hillsborough survivors and their families for how they dealt with the aftermath of the tragedy.

"While there have been many wonderful tributes to our lost loved ones and their families, for which we are very grateful, we the family of the late Anne Williams and many other families would like to pay tribute to those who survived and came home from that very dark day in 1989," said Danny, who invited Stevie Hart and Tony O'Keefe – two Liverpool fans who carried Kevin across the Hillsborough pitch in search of medical attention – to attend.

"It was Anne's wish to pay tribute and to recognise the suffering the disaster caused, not only the mental and physical effects but then having to put up with the tirade of lies printed by some media outlets.

"This tribute is not intended to undermine the great help and support many have given our survivors for many years, it is just to say thank you and to recognise the efforts many of you made to save lives, organising yourselves, making the majority of professionals look like amateurs. Without your efforts many more lives could have been lost."





THE LFC FOUNDATION LEGENDS CHARITY MATCH 2018

Saturday 24th March KO: 3pm
Anfield Stadium



Legends

vs



FC BAYERN
LEGENDS

On sale now! Adults £20 / Juniors £5 / Over 65 £15
Hospitality packages start from £70 per person

For ticket information please visit
www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets

All proceeds will be donated to the LFC Foundation, the official charity of Liverpool Football Club, which creates life changing opportunities for children and young people. (Registered charity no: 1096572)

IMAGINE...

A stunning work of art is one of the centrepieces of the club's 125 anniversary celebrations

Artist Jamie with John Barnes, Ian Callaghan and Roger Hunt

An exclusive event at Anfield recently marked the unveiling of the Liverpool FC Dream Scene, a unique artwork commemorating the club's 125th anniversary.

Attended by Reds legends John Barnes, Ian Callaghan and Roger Hunt as well as representatives of the Shankly, Paisley and Raisbeck families, the evening saw international sports artist Jamie Cooper reveal the image that brings together 20 important figures from LFC history.

Jamie, a former professional footballer in Australia, had been tasked with creating a defining image that distilled past, present and future of this great club in one magical moment in time, with a number of subtle nods to other key figures and events in the LFC story.

He called it "a great honour to have been entrusted with this challenge and responsibility. A club like Liverpool has meaning beyond what happens on the field. It is a community, a family that extends beyond the boundaries of the white lines."





LFC legend Roger Hunt, who's in the Dream Scene, with fellow guests

How it looked on the programme cover

Since retiring from playing the game he's spent two decades honing this new skill – "creating images for sporting clubs in the US, Australia and now Europe, where players from several generations are brought together into a 'Dream Scene'.

"I painstakingly piece together hundreds of images from different times to create a believable scene where these legends live and breathe together. They interact in a moment that is surely every fan's dream-come-true."

His challenge is "to tell a story, to imagine what these characters would have said to each other, what tales they would have told and what personalities would have been drawn together in this impossible gathering.

"As football fans, wouldn't we love to walk among them, to mingle with them as they celebrate playing the greatest game of all?"

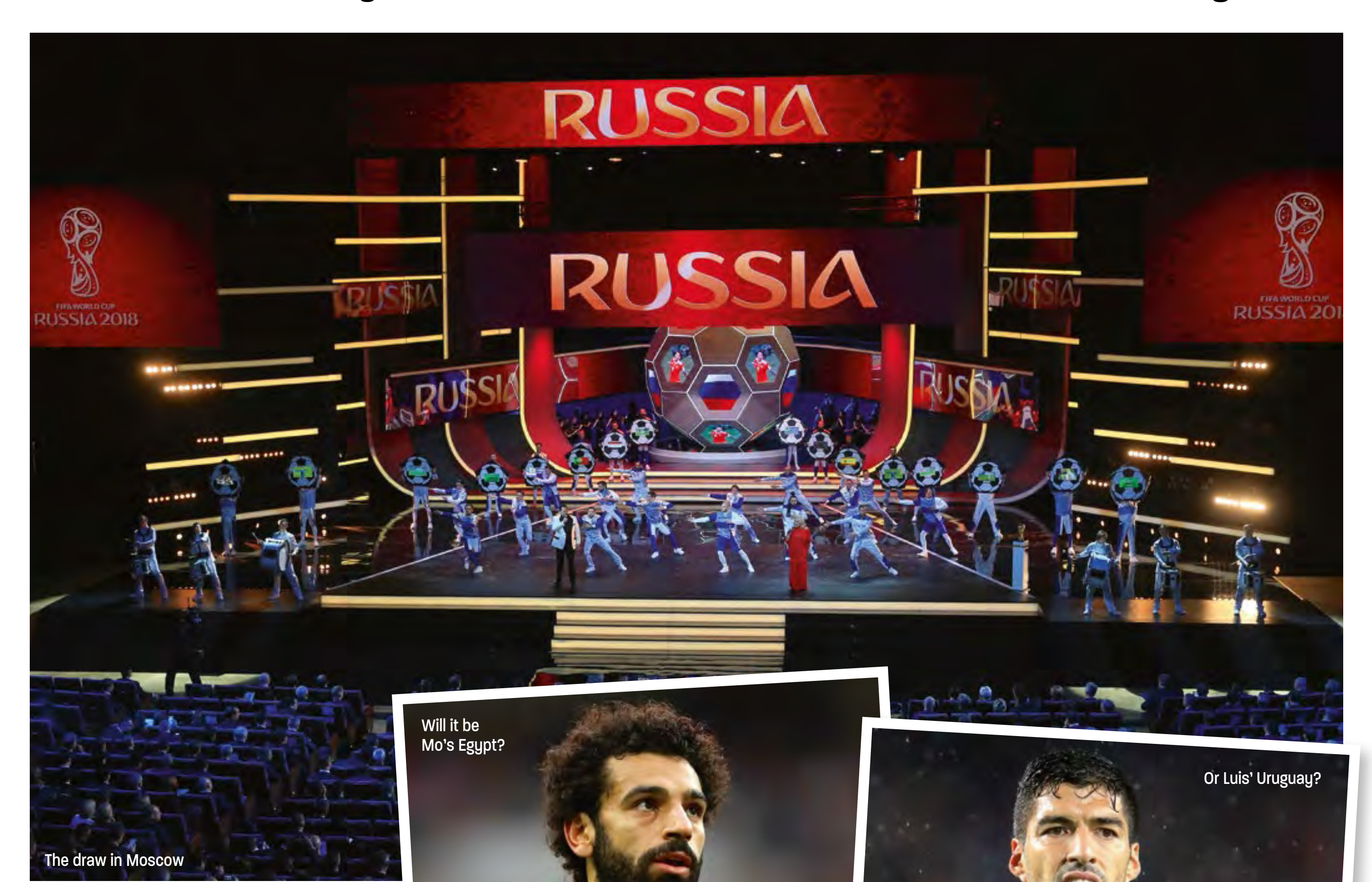
Special guests at the unveiling, invited through the Red Neighbours programme, included 95-year-old Pure LFC kit-launch star Charlie Gallagher and members of local charity the League of Welldoers. Young supporter Joseph Thurston, who won a competition to appear in the Dream Scene, helped reveal the image with artist Jamie.

The artwork featured on the front cover of the subsequent Liverpool FC matchday programme for the Premier League game against Southampton, as well as inside the publication as a special gatefold souvenir pullout.

The painting itself will be on display in the Anfield store until the end of the season with a range of prints available to purchase online and in club stores now.

LFC WORLD CUP

What the draw for next year's finals in Russia means for Anfield's international contingent



The draw in Moscow

Will it be Mo's Egypt?

Or Luis' Uruguay?

The last player to score more than 15 goals in a season for Liverpool FC was Luis Suarez, who hit the net 31 times during the 2013/14 campaign.

By the time his Uruguay side meet Egypt in Ekaterinburg in the second game of World Cup 2018 then Mo Salah may have surpassed that total.

Salah's 17 goals in 22 games is nothing short of a phenomenal start to his Anfield career and makes Egypt's head-to-head with Uruguay on Friday 15 June one of the most eagerly anticipated clashes set to feature Liverpool players in Russia next summer.

Egypt will also take on the hosts and Saudi Arabia in Group A while over in Group H Sadio Mane will make his World Cup debut against Poland (Tuesday 19 June, kick-off 1pm) in Moscow before his Senegal side face Japan and Colombia.

Our boys from Brazil, Philippe Coutinho and Roberto Firmino, begin their Group E campaign against Switzerland in Rostov on Sunday 17 June and will potentially find themselves up against team-mates Marko Grujic and Lazar Markovic ten days later when they face Serbia with Costa Rica also being drawn in the same group.

"It was very important for us to qualify," says Coutinho. "The team has improved a lot. Now we're getting towards the most important moment, the most special, the World Cup."

Defending champions Germany are the bookies' favourites to retain the trophy with Emre Can set to make his World Cup bow against Mexico on 17 June, with Sweden and South Korea also in Group F, while Dejan Lovren's Croatia have been pitched into a tricky-looking Group D that also includes Argentina, Iceland and Nigeria. He'll be up against ex-Red Javier Mascherano in Novgorod on Thursday 21 June.

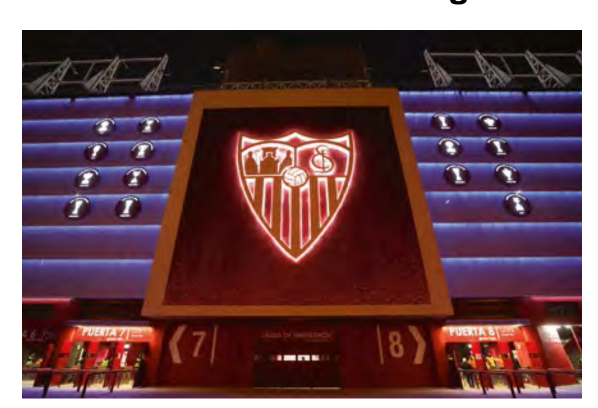
Alberto Moreno will be hoping to make the Spain squad for their mouth-watering opener against European champions Portugal on 15 June – Morocco and Iran also being in Group B – which leaves us with Group G and the possibility of Simon Mignolet playing for Belgium in Kaliningrad on 28 June against an England side that could feature any number of Jordan Henderson, Adam Lallana, Daniel Sturridge, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Nathaniel Clyne, Joe Gomez and Dominic Solanke!

Both nations are expected to have already progressed to the last 16 by beating Tunisia and Panama before that group decider, but then World Cups don't always go to plan...


21
BRASIL

QUE PARTIDO!

What a match! Once again the Reds play their part in a thrilling Champions League night



Twenty-six degrees and a big winter sun beating down on the streets of downtown Seville in the early afternoon. For those Liverpool fans in tee-shirts and shorts lucky enough to be in southern Spain for the recent Champions League group game it was some contrast to the dismal weather they'd left behind in Blighty.

At least it was for those who'd travelled from Merseyside and other parts of the UK – as always there were lots of Reds who'd converged upon Seville from all corners of the globe, many to meet up with friends and family members from Liverpool whom they only ever see when the Reds are on tour.

Near-24-hour long-haul flight from Singapore via several stopping-points *en route*? Not a problem for one supporter who did an 'in-and-out' on the day of the game, and there were plenty more like him.

Some, like this correspondent, flew from Liverpool JLA to Malaga then took the reasonably-priced, two-



The stadium mosaic



Next day's headlines


Modern architecture above the old market


Your carriage awaits

Pre-kick-off lightshow

and-a-half-hour train ride to Seville in time to have a quick look around this picturesque Andalusian city before matchday: puffing and blowing up the endless steps to the top of the Giralda, looking down on the spires and domes of the massive cathedral and picking out the bullring and historic Torre del Oro on the riverfront, and the white walls, courtyards and terracotta roofs of the Triana district on the far bank of the Guadalquivir.

Then an hour or two sampling the local tapas and tipples in some old bar strewn with pistachio shells and plastered with faded photographs of long-gone bullfighters.

The stadium wasn't too shabby either. A short bus-ride east of the old town, the 42,000-seater Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan has had a facelift in recent years and it looked spectacular from the outside: lit up in fluorescent blue, red and white with a huge mosaic two-thirds the height of the stadium depicting the crests of 60 or so other clubs that have played here – add Liverpool to it pronto!

Inside, two-and-a-half-thousand travelling fans in one corner added to the atmosphere for arguably the best group encounter so far this season.

Sure, it could have ended better on the night, but Sevilla and its fervent fans knew they'd been in a football match – and once again LFC played its part in an unforgettable night of European football.

WHAT'S



LFC Museum
LFC Superstore
sborough Memorial
YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892

ON: DEC



FESTIVE FOOTBALL

Anfield stages four Premier League fixtures this month – two before Christmas and two after.

The 229th Merseyside derby begins proceedings on Sunday 10 December with West Brom providing the opposition three days later, which is Liverpool's first domestic midweek match at home this season.

Two away games follow – a trip to AFC Bournemouth on Sunday 17 (4.30pm) then Arsenal on Friday 22 December (7.45pm) – before Boxing Day brings a home fixture with Swansea City (5.30pm).

Four days later the Reds sign off for 2017 against Leicester City at Anfield, on Saturday 30 December (3pm). The New Year? There's a fairly interesting FA Cup tie to be played, we hear...

WHAT'S ON: DEC

UP FOR THE FA YOUTH CUP



Steven Gerrard makes his FA Youth Cup debut as a coach when he takes his Under-18s side to Hartlepool United for a third-round clash at Victoria Park on Wednesday 13 December.

Gerrard says: "I know the players in my team are really looking forward to it and to have my first experience of the tournament as a coach means I'm excited myself."

Two days earlier Steven's Under-19s will have discovered the identity of their opponents in the last 16 of the UEFA Youth League when the draw takes place in Nyon, Switzerland.

Meanwhile Liverpool's Under-23s complete their 2017 schedule with two home fixtures. First up for coach Neil Critchley's side is a Premier League 2 clash with Swansea City on Saturday 16 December before PSV Eindhoven provide the opposition in the Premier League International Cup on Tuesday 19.

Anniversaries and birthdays

It's 51 years since Johan Cruyff scored twice at Anfield for Ajax in the second leg of a European Cup second-round tie on 14 December 1966.

He was just 19 at the time, and that night made a lasting impression, as he revealed in his posthumously-published autobiography *My Turn*.

"At the time Liverpool were not just the best team in England but one of the strongest teams in the world," he wrote. "I can still recall pretty much everything about the legendary *mistwedstrijd* ('fog game') in the Olympic Stadium in Amsterdam and the return match at Anfield. In Amsterdam the final score was 5-1 and we had blown the English champions away in a technical sense, although I still remember their manager Bill Shankly saying after the end of the game that it was a freak result and it would be 7-0 in Liverpool."

Cruyff had scored twice in that first leg and he'd get two more in the return. "I stood on the pitch at Anfield with goosebumps," he continued. "Not because I was scared of our opponents but because of the atmosphere. The huge Kop stand where the most fanatical supporters were, and all their singing: Anfield was incredibly impressive."

Terry McDermott **66** on 8 Dec
Charlie Adam **32** on 10 Dec
Steve Nicol **56** on 11 Dec
Stig Inge Bjornebye **48** on 11 Dec
Stephen Warnock **36** on 12 Dec
Daniel Agger **33** on 12 Dec
Martin Skrtel **33** on 15 Dec
Michael Owen **38** on 14 Dec
Ryan Babel **31** on 19 Dec
Ali Johnson **19** on 24 Dec
Gary McAllister **53** on Christmas Day
Peter Krawietz **46** on 31 Dec



17 years since Igor Biscan made his debut at Ipswich on 10 Dec 2000
37 years since Ian Rush made his debut at Ipswich on 13 Dec 1980
92 years since Gordon Hodgson signed for LFC on 14 Dec 1925
63 years since LFC's 1-9 defeat at Birmingham City, on 11 Dec 1954
27 years since Steve McManaman debuted v Sheff Utd on 15 Dec 1990
58 years since LFC's first game under Bill Shankly on 19 Dec 1959

FIXTURES 2017/18

AUGUST

Sat 12	Watford (A)	3-3
Tue 15	Hoffenheim (A) UCL	2-1
Sat 19	**Crystal Palace** (H)	1-0
Wed 23	**Hoffenheim** (H) UCL	4-2
Sun 27	**Arsenal** (H)	4-0

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9	Manchester City (A)	0-5
Wed 13	**Sevilla** (H) UCL	2-2
Sat 16	**Burnley** (H)	1-1
Tue 19	Leicester City (A) CC3	0-2
Sat 23	Leicester City (A)	3-2
Tue 26	Spartak Moscow (A) UCL	1-1

OCTOBER

Sun 1	Newcastle United (A)	1-1
Sat 14	**Manchester United** (H)	0-0
Tue 17	Maribor (A) UCL	7-0
Sun 22	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	1-4
Sat 28	**Huddersfield Town** (H)	3-0

NOVEMBER

Wed 1	**Maribor** (H) UCL	3-0
Sat 4	West Ham United (A)	4-1
Sat 18	**Southampton** (H)	3-0
Tue 21	Sevilla (A) UCL	3-3
Sat 25	**Chelsea** (H)	1-1
Wed 29	Stoke City (A)	3-0

DECEMBER

Sat 2	Brighton (A)	5-1
Wed 6	**Spartak Moscow** (H) UCL	
Sun 10	**Everton** (H)	
Wed 13	**West Brom** (H)	
Sun 17	AFC Bournemouth (A)	
Fri 22	Arsenal (A)	
Tue 26	**Swansea City** (H)	
Sat 30	**Leicester City** (H)	

JANUARY

Mon 1	Burnley (A)
Sat 6/Sun 7	**Everton** (H, FAC 3)
Sun 14	**Manchester City** (H)
Mon 22	Swansea City (A)
Sa 27/Su 28	FA Cup 4th round (TBC)
Tue 30	Huddersfield Town (A)

FEBRUARY

Sat 3	**Tottenham** (H)
Sat 10	Southampton (A)
Tu 13/We 14	UCL last 16 1st leg
Sa 17/Su 18	FA Cup 5th round (TBC)
Tu 20/We 21	UCL last 16 1st leg
Sat 24	**West Ham United** (H)

MARCH

Sat 3	**Newcastle United** (H)
Tu 6/We 7	UCL last 16 2nd leg
Sa 10/Su 11	FA Cup 6th round (TBC)
Sat 10	Manchester United (A)
Tu 13/We 14	UCL last 16 2nd leg
Sat 17	**Watford** (H)
Sat 31	Crystal Palace (A)

APRIL

Tu 3/We 4	UCL quarter-final 1st leg
Sat 7	Everton (A)
Tu 10/We 11	UCL quarter-final 2nd leg
Sat 14	**AFC Bournemouth** (H)
Sat 21	West Brom (A)
Sa 21/Su 22	FA Cup semi-final (TBC)
Tu 24/We 25	UCL semi-final 1st leg
Sat 28	**Stoke City** (H)

MAY

Tu 1/We 2	UCL semi-final 2nd leg
Sat 5	Chelsea (A)
Sun 13	**Brighton** (H)
Sat 19	FA Cup final (TBC)
Sat 26	UCL final (Kiev)

*UCL = UEFA Champions League



12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY





Win a different prize every day as we count down to the festive season.

From 11th to the 22nd December LFC Official Membership are giving you the opportunity to win a different prize every single day from Hospitality Match Tickets to signed merchandise.

For your chance to enter visit the Members Area each day from 11th December.

Not a member? Join now for your chance to take part at
liverpoolfc.com/membership





Celebrate 125 years of Liverpool Football Club with LFC Official Membership



Golden boots that score plenty of goals, Mo Salah was joint-quickest to 10 Premier League goals for the Reds with which of his team-mates? **Answer on page 98**

Sadio, Simon and the skipper speak plus a feast of golden goals

FOOTBALL



I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE PART OF THIS ATTACKING TEAM WITH SO MANY GREAT PLAYERS – WE CAN ALWAYS SCORE GOALS

Who's the fastest: Sadio Mane or Mo Salah? The Senegalese speed king reveals all in this exclusive festive-themed interview





In the hours after Liverpool's dramatic stoppage-time Merseyside derby win at Goodison Park on 19 December last year, joyous travelling Kopites headed back across Stanley Park for a celebratory drink in a local alehouse.

A 94th-minute goal from Sadio Mane – who pounced to score after Daniel Sturridge had struck the post – on his derby debut had sparked wild scenes in the away end and the post-match party had a festive feel to it with Christmas a few days away.

Mane wasn't even born when Welsh singer-songwriter Shakin' Stevens released *Merry Christmas Everyone* in 1985, but by the end of the night Liverpool supporters had reworked it in tribute to the Senegalese striker's decisive finish.

"Mane scoring, all around us, Kopites singing, having fun. It's the season, love and understanding, Merry Christmas, Everton!"

Some of the Kop's most famous songs and chants have been impromptu reactions to events on the pitch. This was no different. A video of it being sung in the pub went viral on social media after being shared more than a family-sized turkey at Christmas dinner and when the Reds faced Stoke City on Boxing Day it rang around Anfield.

A year later and a smile crosses Sadio's face as I mention that goal to him. We're sat in a Melwood office adorned with canvases of famous Liverpool number 7s including Kevin Keegan, Kenny Dalglish, Peter Beardsley and Luis Suarez.

They all had their goalscoring moments against Everton – while wearing a different shirt number than the 19 on Sadio's back – but for sheer late drama then arguably only Gary McAllister's even-later strike from over 40 yards out in a 3-2 win at Goodison Park in 2001 is comparable. So I ask him what it felt like to put the ball into the net and see around 3,000 Reds celebrate manically in the Bullens Road stand.

"You, me – everybody here knows it is the derby, so when you score the winning goal in the last minute it is always going to be special." he smiles. "I just try to be there for the team and to do my best. On that night I got my reward by scoring a goal in the derby.

"I was happy for the Liverpool fans. It is the best thing we can do for them because of course they always want to win the derby against Everton. I was very happy to score, very happy for the team to win and very happy for the fans."

A song isn't the only tribute that Liverpool supporters have devoted to Mane's derby winner. Fans website theredmen.tv (shirt sponsors of non-league club AFC Liverpool) have created a sweatshirt featuring his goal celebration. Mane looks quizzical as I hand him an print-out with an image of the jumper on it before he bursts into laughter as I explain it's been produced in tribute to his derby-day winner.

"It shows that last Christmas that win was the best present we could give to the fans," he says, his eyes transfixed on the image. "Seeing this makes me very happy! It would be so funny to see them wearing this jumper!

The sweatshirt that made Sadio smile

"I've never seen this before but it is very nice and the picture on the front is very nice too! I think I will have to try to do my best to repeat this, to score against Everton and beat them."

As you've probably worked out, this interview took place before the derby that was due to take place at Anfield on Saturday 10 December, after this magazine went to print. Mane went into it knowing he also scored in last season's Anfield derby, a 3-1 win in which he also suffered a season-ending injury. So hopefully his goalscoring record has continued.

He also now knows what it feels like to score in the Champions League for Liverpool, his spectacular diving header away to Sevilla being his first European goal for club. The 3-3 draw, however, after the Reds blew a three-nil half-time lead, has taken some of the shine off the moment for the 25-year-old.

"I was very happy to score that goal. I just saw the corner come over and I followed the ball because I know it is always possible to get the second ball at the last post. I followed it in, got the ball and I scored.

"It was good to score in the Champions League but the more important thing was the result. We would have loved to win the game. We played a very positive half and scored three goals but in the second half it was more difficult for us. We conceded three goals and it was 3-3."

Having heard countless strikers tell me 'the result is more important than scoring' over the years that it's become a classic cliched response, I ask Mane if he really means it – surely scoring is the best feeling in football even if you don't win?

"Honestly? Every striker really loves to only score goals so that the team win," he replies. "The win is always the most important thing. If you score two goals and the team doesn't win, it makes no sense to be happy about this. The most important reason for scoring is so the team win."

I ALWAYS WANT TO PLAY FOR MY COUNTRY BUT I'M HAPPY THAT THE CUP OF NATIONS HAS BEEN MOVED

Speaking of goals, it's impossible not to ask about Mo Salah's impact since his summer arrival from AS Roma. To play predominantly as a wide attacker and net 17 goals in his opening 21 games for Liverpool is a 'Pharaoh-ld' return from the Egyptian international, so what is he like to play alongside?

"I am very happy to have Mo in our team. He is a great player and a great personality. I always enjoy playing with him in the team and the other boys too. It is easy play alongside great players like Mo. We just need to be in the same team all season so we can get to know each other better so that it is easier for us in games, so we can do good things in the game.

"Honestly, we attack a lot in this team and we can always score many goals. I am very happy to be part of this great attacking team and play alongside so many great players."

LFCTV timed both of Salah's counter-attack goals against Arsenal and West Ham, the stop-clock showing that in each game he made it from one end of the pitch to the other before scoring in the space of 13 seconds.

Which leads me to the burning question that every Kopite wants to know the answer to: just who is quicker, Sadio Mane or Mo Salah?





Sadio scores in Seville
– but he wasn't happy


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"I think he's quicker than me!" exclaims Mane before again bursting into laughter. "Mo is quicker than me!" That sets him off into fits of giggles, making it impossible not to laugh along with him.

One of the the many enduring qualities about the instantly likeable Mane is that he's got an infectious laugh. Another is that he's too cool for school. In fact I'm not sure if I've ever met a more relaxed footballer. He walks around Melwood in a languid style looking so chilled-out that you imagine he wouldn't be fazed if a sheepdog herding a flock of fluffy white sheep onto the main training pitch scampered past him in the corridor.

Sadio's easy-going nature is in complete contrast to his explosive pace and aggression on the pitch, which also makes the softly-spoken forward good fun to interview.

"Mo hasn't tried to have a race with me yet," he continues after the laugher subsides, "but he is also very quick. He has great speed and gives a lot to the team...but we must also try to do our best to help him score many more goals."

Mane began 2017 with a goal in a 2-2 draw at Sunderland but then didn't play for Liverpool again for almost a calendar month due to Senegal's involvement in the Africa Cup of Nations in Gabon, a tournament Salah also participated in with Egypt.

During the time he was away, the Reds won just one of seven games, were eliminated from both the EFL Cup and FA Cup after suffering Anfield defeats to Southampton and Wolves, and failed to win in the Premier League. Following his return Liverpool took 13 points from a possible 15 at home to Chelsea, Tottenham, Burnley, Arsenal and Everton, suggesting it was no co-incidence that results were better with Mane in the side.

The good news is that there's no Africa Cup of Nations in 2018. The great news is that although there is a tournament in 2019, a rescheduling of the international football calendar means it will now be held in June so the days when Mane (or Salah) will be called away for a month during a crucial stage of the domestic season are gone. Sadio is genuinely pleased at such a development.

"Honestly, it was not easy for me in January. Senegal is my country and I want to play for my country, but on the other side I didn't want to miss any games in the season for Liverpool.

"I think people understand how difficult it was for me, but it is so much better now that the Africa Cup of Nations is not in January any more.




I ONLY LIKE TO SCORE GOALS WHEN THE TEAM WIN – THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL
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"It has been moved to the summer in 2019 and I am very happy for this as I do not like to miss any games in the season."

The year 2018 is, of course, a World Cup one, with Russia hosting FIFA's showpiece event for the first time. It is impossible to understate what a big deal Senegal's qualification is for Mane. "I think qualifying for the World Cup is the aim for each player in the world so I am very happy to help the team to do it. I'm really looking forward to playing in the Senegal team at the World Cup."

Mane grew up in the small rural village of Banbali in Senegal's deep south. His father is still an imam at the local mosque. Sedihou, the town where Sadio was born, is a 50-minute drive away. In 2002 it had a population of 18,465 – roughly the same as that of Litherland now – and they were all captivated by the World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

It was the first time in the nation's entire history that Senegal had qualified and they couldn't have had a tougher start, facing world champions France in Seoul. Barthez, Thuram, Lizarazu, Lebouef, Desailly, Vieira, Petit, Wiltord, Djorkaeff, Trezeguet, Henry... They were seemingly a shoo-in to win against a Senegalese side managed by Frenchman Bruno Metsu and featuring players who predominantly played for the smaller clubs in France, only for one of the World Cup's greatest-ever shocks to occur.

MO GIVES A LOT TO THE TEAM BUT WE MUST ALSO TRY OUR BEST TO HELP HIM SCORE MORE GOALS

Inspired by the mazy dribbles of El-Hadji Diouf, they won 1-0 courtesy of a first-half goal from Papa Bouba Diop. It emerged after the game that Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier had already agreed an £11m deal with Lens to bring 21-year-old Diouf to Anfield while his Senegalese team-mate Salif Diao, a central midfielder, would subsequently be signed after the tournament. Their Liverpool careers were ultimately disappointments, but Diouf – who was African footballer of the year in 2001 and 2002 – remains a hero in his homeland.

Mane was ten years old at the time and watched the France match after school in his friend's house. He also saw the 1-1 and 3-3 draws with Denmark and Uruguay that took Senegal into the last sixteen, their 2-1 golden-goal extra-time victory against Sweden and finally their golden-goal quarter-final exit to Turkey. He'd been kicking a ball since the age of three, but Senegal's surprise progress in 2002 made him determined to become a footballer himself.



On your marks, get set...



A deft finish at Stoke

"I was young but I never missed a Senegal game in that World Cup. I will never forget because it was where everything started for me. It inspired me to love football more and to become a football player.

"El-Hadji Diouf was my hero. He was doing great for the national team and everybody loved him in Senegal, so I did too. That World Cup was very important for me."

Mane's rise from the local pitches of Senegal to the verge of a World Cup finals tournament is nothing short of remarkable. Because of Benbali's remote location even his uncle doubted he'd ever get spotted and forge a career in the game. "I didn't believe him," Sadio said in an interview last year, "but he believed. Even in the local winter tournaments, he would repeat it to me."

However, at the age of 15 Mane



travelled to Senegal's capital Dakar with his uncle to take part in trials. He looked out of place with his pair of battered old boots and tatty shorts.

But after showing what he could do on the pitch he was offered a place in the academy of Generation Foot, a Senegalese club formed in 2000.

It meant Sadio had to leave his home village and move almost 500 miles away to live with a family he had never met before – something that took a lot of persuading before his parents agreed to it – but it was a brave move that launched his career.

He was spotted by Metz and moved to France to play for them in 2011, working his way to Liverpool via Austria's Red Bull Salzburg (2012-14) and Southampton (2014-16). He won his first international cap in 2012 and is considered by his national team coach Aliou Cisse (who also played in the 2002 World Cup before moving to Portsmouth and Birmingham City) to be Senegal's star man.

"What Mane has is a gift from God," he told *The Guardian*. "I'm not the one who has helped to lift his level or who makes him the person he is. Of course it's good for him to be in the team he is in at the moment, a team that gives him opportunities to improve, and he just needs to carry on what he's doing."

Senegal will play Poland, Colombia and Japan in Group H next summer with the draw having taken place since we met at Melwood. Ahead of it, though, Mane was buzzing with anticipation and excitement about who his nation might meet.

"I can't wait!" he says, unable to stop a smile from spreading across his face. "I'm excited! It's my first time for the World Cup and I want to see which countries we are going to play. Whoever we play, I think we are just going to go there and try to do our best to win the games."

I ask him if he's considered what it would be like to play against his Liverpool team-mates if their paths cross in Russia and he can't help but laugh again.

"Oh we have always been talking about this! We were saying it will be Brazil, England, Egypt and Senegal in the same group. Everybody was laughing! It is going to be a tough group whoever we get but hopefully we will get a better group than that one would be!"

You can judge whether he got his wish yourselves having seen the draw, but as we wrap up the interview with a standard question about Liverpool's prospects in the coming weeks – "We are winning games and the confidence is here in the team, we are going to try to do our best until the end of the season by trying to win all of our games" – I noticed that Sadio is still clutching the print-out of that Christmas jumper so ask if he wants to keep hold of it?

"Yeeeees!" he replies with another smile. "It's very nice!"

Words: Chris McLoughlin **Photos:** John Powell

The best LFC

JAN: BOBBY'S HALF-VOLLEY



ROBERTO FIRMINO v Swansea City (H) Premier League, Saturday 21 January.
A rare headed finish by Lucas at Plymouth Argyle in the FA Cup was arguably the Reds' most memorable – and unlikely – a goal in January 2017, but for sheer quality there wasn't a better strike than Roberto Firmino's second against Swansea City at Anfield.

Gini Wijnaldum's cross from the left was a little high, but the Brazilian managed to lean backwards while in mid-air above the penalty-spot and kill the ball with his chest before sweeping a powerful low left-footed volley beyond the dive of Lukasz Fabianski into the bottom corner. And this was while he was under pressure from Martin Olsson.

To display such control and finish on his 'weaker' foot in the blink of an eye was a further reminder of what a talent Firmino is.

goals of 2017

Starring Sadio, Mo, Bobby, Phil, Gini, Emre and Dom...

FEB: MANE IN MOTION

SADIO MANE v Tottenham Hotspur (H) Premier League, Saturday 11 February.
Not only are there less days in February but there were also less Liverpool games and goals, with Sadio Mane's double in the space of three minutes during a 2-0 win at home to Spurs being the most wildly celebrated.

His first was the pick of the two. Receiving the ball in the centre-circle, Gini Wijnaldum spotted Mane's diagonal run from right to left and played an inch-perfect pass for the Senegalese speedster to run onto.

Leaving Ben Davies in a cloud of dust, Sadio touched the ball onto his right foot and – with Hugo Loris advancing – fired a sweet side-footed effort into the Annie Road end net to spark joyous scenes replicated 90 seconds later when he struck again.















MARCH: GINI ON THE COUNTER

GEORGINIO WIJNALDUM v Arsenal (H) Premier League, Saturday 4 March.
With Liverpool 2-1 up going into stoppage-time and the Gunners sending the heavy artillery forward in search of an equaliser, tension was building inside Anfield when, after Joel Matip blocked a shot by Alexis Sanchez, the ball fell to Adam Lallana who sent Divock Origi darting away down the right with a sublime pass using the outstep of his boot.

As Origi looked up he spotted a red blur powering through the middle like a steam train careering towards its destination. It was der-der-der-der-der-der Gini Wijnaldum.

The flying Dutchman had been on the edge of his own box when Sanchez had shot, but he showed the desire, determination and stamina to run from one penalty-area to the other before dispatching a perfectly-placed shot past Petr Cech from Origi's cross to have the Kop bouncing as his name rang around a raucous Anfield.


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L.F.C.

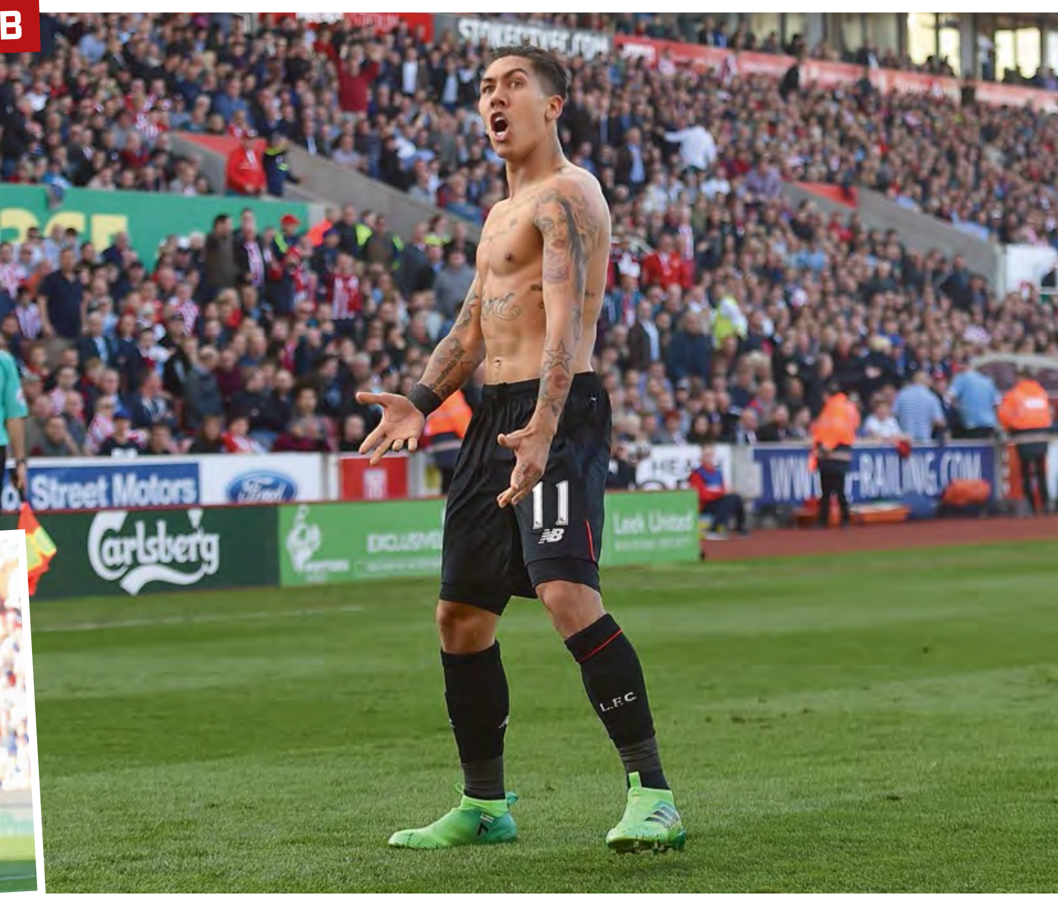
APRIL: SMASH & GRAB

ROBERTO FIRMINO v Stoke City (A)
Premier League, Saturday 8 April.

Philippe Coutinho scored two crackers in April – an Anfield curler in the derby and a free-kick at home to Crystal Palace – but Bobby's winner at Stoke was a belter.

The Reds had been trailing 1-0 at the break but the boys from Brazil, on as half-time subs, turned the game around with Coutinho slotting in an equaliser that the travelling Kop were still celebrating when Firmino ran onto a Wijnaldum pass over the top, let the ball bounce once just outside the area then unleashed a dipping half-volley that flew over the head of Lee Grant and tested just how well the Stoke City groundsman ties the nets down to give the Reds a 2-1 victory.















MAY: CAN'T TOUCH THIS

EMRE CAN v Watford (A)
Premier League, Monday 1 May.

Goal of month, goal of the year, maybe even goal of the decade and of Liverpool FC's Premier League era too.

Emre's bicycle-kick at Watford – struck from just inside the box while on the run to meet Lucas' chipped pass – was a worldie that left Hornets keeper Heurelho Gomes so stunned that he didn't even dive while the home fans couldn't help but applaud.

"When the ball came I wanted to head it," admitted Emre, "but it was a great ball by Lucas. I just didn't think too much and I scored a beauty like that. I think it's the best goal I've ever scored."

It was so special it won four goal-of-the-season awards from Liverpool FC, BBC *Match of the Day*, Sky Sports *Monday Night Football* and Premier League goal of the season sponsors Carling. And deservedly so.






JUNE: ORANGEY BOOM

GEORGINIO WIJNALDUM v Luxembourg (Rotterdam) World Cup qualifier, Friday 9 June.
Okay so it wasn't a goal for Liverpool, but as he was wearing an orange strip not too dissimilar to Bold Citrus while playing for Holland on his old Feyenoord stomping ground in a month when the Reds never play, then Gini Wijnaldum's strike in a 5-0 win against Luxembourg will do for us.

It came after a cross from the right was diverted back towards the edge of the box and Wijnaldum struck with the instep of his left foot before it nestled in the net.

That strike was Gini's eighth international goal on the night be won his 40th cap although he won't get the opportunity to showcase his talent in Russia next summer after the Netherlands failed to qualify for the World Cup, despite having finished third in 2014 after beating Brazil in the third-place play-off, a game Wijnaldum also netted in.







JULY: HONG KONG DOM

DOMINIC SOLANKE v Crystal Palace (Hong Kong) Asia Trophy, Wed 19 July.
Mo Salah (header) and Philippe Coutinho (curler) scored a couple of excellent goals to clinch the Asia Trophy against Leicester City in Hong Kong, but the Reds wouldn't have reached the final if it wasn't for a piece of excellent finishing by Solanke against Crystal Palace in the semi-final after he came on as a second-half substitute with the score at 0-0.

Coutinho picked out Divock Origi with a forward pass and the Belgian flicked the ball on with his heel. Solanke had to check back to get possession, but he turned instantly before firing a low 22-yard drive that zipped past the diving Wayne Hennessey.

It was ex-Chelsea striker Solanke's first goal for the Reds and Jürgen Klopp was impressed: "He could have played the pass but he shoots and it was a very good idea."






SOLANKE
29



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AUG: THAT'S FOOTBALL

EMRE CAN v TSG 1899 Hoffenheim (H)
Champions League qualifier
Wednesday 23 August.

In any other month Trent Alexander-Arnold's Champions League debut goal from a free-kick away to TSG 1899 Hoffenheim would've won comfortably, but when the German side visited Merseyside for the second leg of the play-off qualification round Liverpool scored one of the finest team-goals witnessed at Anfield for years.

It was already 2-0 to the Reds when Roberto Firmino pinged Alberto Moreno's pass to Gini Wijnaldum who swept the ball forward for Sadio Mane to take on his man down the left wing. Mane cut inside, dragging two opponents with him, only to back-heel the ball to the overlapping Firmino who sent a first-time left-footed cross to the far post where Emre Can was arriving to volley home from six yards out.

"That's football!" shouted Jürgen Klopp towards the Main Stand as he punched the air in celebration.



















SEPT: FOXY FREE-KICK

PHILIPPE COUTINHO v Leicester City (A)
Premier League, Saturday 23 September.

Liverpool's little magician has scored so many goals from outside the area that you almost take them for granted, and this direct free-kick to help the Reds outfox Leicester was up there with Philippe Coutinho's best.

A little over 25 yards out, with a wall of blue lined up in front of him and Kasper Schmeichel stood towards his left-hand post, Coutinho took three paces forward before whipping a curling free-kick over the wall and just inside the Danish goalkeeper's right-hand post. He didn't lay a glove on it.

It was Phil's 16th Premier League goal from outside the box since his debut in February 2013, more than any other player in the division...which is quite a record for a player who had to wait behind Luis Suarez and Steven Gerrard for two-and-a-half seasons to be given free-kick duties!



OCT: ANGEL OF THE NORTH

PHILIPPE COUTINHO v Newcastle United (A) Premier League, Sunday 1 October.
Top players can produce something out of nothing, conjure up a goal out of nowhere. Philippe Coutinho is one of them and he did precisely that to open the scoring against Rafa Benitez's Magpies.

Picking up the ball on the left he cut inside past one man, dropped his shoulder to create space as Jonjo Shelvey fronted up to him and unleashed a powerful drive from about 25 yards out with just enough bend on it to fizz past Rob Elliot at his near post.

It wasn't the only classy finish Coutinho produced in October either with his guided volley from James Milner's cross in the 7-0 Champions League win away to MK Maribor once again showing that when it comes to technique there are few better than Liverpool's no10.



MO...VEMBER!

MO SALAH v West Ham United (A) Premier League, Saturday 4 November.
Goals on the counter-attack are arguably the most exciting in football and Mohamed Salah's opener in the excellent 4-1 win at West Ham United in November was a perfect example of how to rip a team apart while defending a corner.

Manuel Lanzini's out-swinger from the right was headed clear by Emre Can, flicked past Angelo Ogbonna by Mo Salah and, all of a sudden, showing the kind of pace last seen in the London Stadium by Usain Bolt in the 2012 Olympic Games, Sadio Mane and Salah were breaking clear in their own half with only Aaron Cresswell back for the caught-out Hammers.

Mane brought the ball forward all the way to the edge of the West Ham box, drew Cresswell across and slipped a pass back to Salah who calmly slotted it past Joe Hart.

It had taken just 13 seconds for Liverpool to go from one end of the pitch to the other and Reds manager Jürgen Klopp was beaming: "Our counter-attacking was pretty perfect today – we had some wonderful play."

It was one of eight goals Salah scored this month including a cracking curler at home to Southampton and a thumping volley at Stoke. No wonder they call it Mo-vember...













Words: Chris McLoughlin


M.SALAH
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Standard
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DEC: END TO END

ROBERTO FIRMINO v Brighton & Hove Albion (A), Premier League
Saturday 2 December

On the second day of Christmas the Redmen gave to me, five goals at Brighton with another stunner from Bobby. And it came from Brighton's kick-off just 79 seconds after Emre Can had opened the scoring at the AMEX Stadium.

Dale Stephens rolled the restart back to Lewis Dunk who hit a long ball forward that Can headed to Dejan Lovren. He clipped the ball forward to Roberto Firmino on the right who, with a cheeky flick of his heel, sent Mo Salah racing past a man and through the middle. With Brighton suddenly on the back-foot Salah slipped a pass to his left to Philippe Coutinho who slid a low first-time cross across the penalty area where Firmino was arriving to side-foot home at the far post.

What a way to start December, and if the Reds keep playing liquid football like that you suspect it won't be the only Christmas cracker they score before the end of 2017...





AIN'T MO STOPPING

Spotlight on Liverpool's lean, mean goalscoring machine and how he equalled a Reds record



Mo Salah's sensational start to his Liverpool FC career saw him equal a club record when he scored in front of the Kop against former club Chelsea last month.

The Egyptian flyer matched a milestone set by Daniel Sturridge in 2012/13 when he reached ten Premier League goals in his 13th league appearance for the Reds. Sturridge accomplished the feat in 1,050 minutes, reaching double-figures with a hat-trick against Fulham in the penultimate game of his debut season. Mo needed 1,084 minutes to register his tenth goal. But Salah also became the outright fastest Liverpool player to a dozen Premier League goals when he furnished a classy cameo at Stoke on Wednesday 29 November 2017 with a brilliant brace.

The 25-year-old, who scored fifteen league goals for Roma in Serie A last season, enjoyed a sensational November in which he scored eight goals in all competitions taking his overall Reds tally to 17 in 21 outings.

GOAL 1 WATFORD (A)
Saturday 12 August 2017

A debut goal which put the Reds 3-2 up at Vicarage Road. Having been clattered by goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes to win the penalty which had seen Roberto Firmino equalise, the Brazilian repaid the compliment, showing an exquisite first touch to take down Dejan Lovren's lofted pass and lovely skill to flick the ball goalwards. Mo demonstrated his predatory instincts to nudge the ball over and open his LFC account.

GOAL 2 ARSENAL (H)
Sunday 27 August 2017

Salah scored his first league goal at Anfield in exactly the same minute as he did his first away league goal: 57. Following an Arsenal corner, Liverpool cleared and Hector Bellerin attempted to control the ball. Salah nipped in to pinch possession then flew 70 yards upfield. Firmino gave rapid support but Mo opted to go it alone, sliding the ball past Petr Cech at the Kop end.

GOAL 3 BURNLEY (H)
Saturday 16 September 2017

Just three minutes after the Clarets went in front, Mo had the Reds back on terms. Emre Can picked the ball up just inside his own half before delivering a measured ball over the top from just inside his own half. Salah read the delivery perfectly as he made a run from right to left and as defenders Stephen Ward and Ben Mee backed off, the Egyptian controlled the ball before taking a touch and steering a fine low finish beyond Burnley keeper Nick Pope.

GOAL 4 LEICESTER CITY (A)
Saturday 23 September 2017
As he has already proven during his brief Anfield career to date, Mo is no slouch in the air despite his small stature. He put the Reds in front after a quarter-of-an-hour at the King Power Stadium with a clever headed effort. Philippe Coutinho picked the ball up on the left edge of the penalty area before picking out Salah's run to the back post with trademark accuracy. Salah read the flight to perfection, getting in behind Leicester left-back Ben Chilwell and squeezing his effort past Foxes keeper Kasper Schmeichel at the near post.

GOAL 5 TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (A)
Sunday 22 October 2017
On a day to forget for the Reds at Wembley, our man offered a glimmer of hope when he halved the arrears midway through the first-half. Salah's awareness saw him latch on to a superb pass from Jordan Henderson. The skipper's defence-splitting ball from just inside his own half dissected Spurs defenders Jan Vertonghen and Serge Aurier and Liverpool's no11 hit a slightly-scuffed first-time finish across Hugo Lloris with his right foot.

GOAL 6 WEST HAM UNITED (A)
Saturday 4 November 2017
Salah struck twice in this 4-1 win and his first came from a classic counter-attack which started with a Hammers corner, described in more detail on page 46 of this issue.

GOAL 7 WEST HAM UNITED (A)
Saturday 4 November 2017
Once again Sadio Mane was the provider as Mo made the game safe against the Hammers with Liverpool's fourth with 15 minutes remaining. Mane raced forward and attacked the home defence, even having time to stumble and regain his footing before lifting a lovely diagonal ball from the right into the path of Salah who had drifted into the penalty area. Mo took a superb first touch to control the ball in an instant before hitting a crisp angled drive across goalie Joe Hart to the delight of the travelling Kop.

GOAL 8 SOUTHAMPTON (H)
Saturday 18 November 2017
The pick of Salah's first ten Premier League goals put the Reds a goal to the good against the Saints at Anfield. The move started with a corner taken by the man himself. It was cleared but Roberto Firmino's counter-pressing saw him dispossess Dusan Tadic. Ragnar Klavan and Gini Wijnaldum then combined to feed Salah on the right edge of the area and he took one touch to take the ball out of his feet before curling in a beauty.





HOW AND WHEN

Inside area **11**
Outside area **1**
Left foot **9**
Right foot **2**
Header **1**

0-15 mins **1**
16-30 mins **3**
31-45 mins **2**
46-60 mins **2**
61-75 mins **1**
76-90 mins **3**

GOAL 9 SOUTHAMPTON (H)
Saturday 18 November 2017
Another lovely strike to double the Reds' advantage. Philippe Coutinho collected the ball midway through the Saints half and, after spotting a fine diagonal run from Salah, the Brazilian flicked a fine pass into his path with the outside of his foot. The attacker had pointed to where he wanted the ball and when Coutinho delivered to just that spot, Salah drifted in behind Southampton centre-back Wesley Hoedt before lifting a first-time finish past the advancing Forster at the Anfield Road end.

GOAL 10 CHELSEA (H)
Saturday 25 November 2017
Mo was involved earlier in the move that opened the scoring against his previous Premier League club, feeding Philippe Coutinho. The Brazilian attacked the Chelsea box with purpose and attempted to play Salah back in but Tiemoue Bakayoko got to the ball first. It ran to Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain who prodded a clever ball into the path of the Egyptian who had continued his run into the box. He took a touch after drifting between Blues defenders Cesar Azpilicueta and Gary Cahill before slotting his shot past Thibaut Courtois for Premier League goal no10 in his 13th appearance.

GOAL 11 STOKE CITY (A)
Wednesday 29 November 2017
With Jürgen Klopp rotating his squad at the start of a demanding programme of games, Salah started the game at Stoke on the bench. But those cliches about whether a top player could still do it on a wet Wednesday in the Potteries were soon put to bed in the 23 minutes he took part in at the bet365 Stadium. In that time he had 14 touches, seven passes, two shots and two goals. His opener gave the Reds, playing in Bold Citrus, breathing space by establishing a two-goal lead. Sadio Mane danced around Darren Fletcher to reach the byline and floated a cross to the far post which was met by a sweet, sweet volley from the perfectly-placed Salah.

GOAL 12 STOKE CITY (A)
Wednesday 29 November 2017
A lovely passing sequence was the prelude to Emre Can looking to exploit Salah's pace with a throughball from inside his own half. Mo made hay after Stoke defender Erik Pieters hesitated and advanced into the area before calmly stroking his shot beyond keeper Lee Grant. A dozen Premier League goals in 14 games for LFC and seven in November alone. No wonder he prefers to let his football do the talking.

Words: William Hughes





FASTEST TO 10 PREMIER LEAGUE GOALS

Mohamed Salah **13** games
Daniel Sturridge **13** games
Robbie Fowler **18** games
Fernando Torres **18** games
Sadio Mane **22** games
Stan Collymore **23** games
Emile Heskey **24** games
Michael Owen **26** games
Ian Rush **27** games
Roberto Firmino **30** games
Dirk Kuyt **30** games

HENDO

The Liverpool captain tackles questions on Liverpool FC's past, present and future





Going into December the team has been on a good run in the Premier League...

We have, but we have to keep going now and build on it. Obviously losing at Spurs was a bad result for us and a poor performance as well. We took that defeat hard, I think, because we just didn't turn up that day and that is so unlike us. I think since then, though, except for the second half against Sevilla we've been far closer to the sort of standards we expect from ourselves.

What's been even more impressive in recent games is how when the manager has made changes, the quality of performance hasn't dropped and neither have the results. This is massive if we're going to be challenging for things; keeps us fresh and sharp and shows how important every player in the squad is.

Does that extra responsibility weigh heavier after disappointing results?

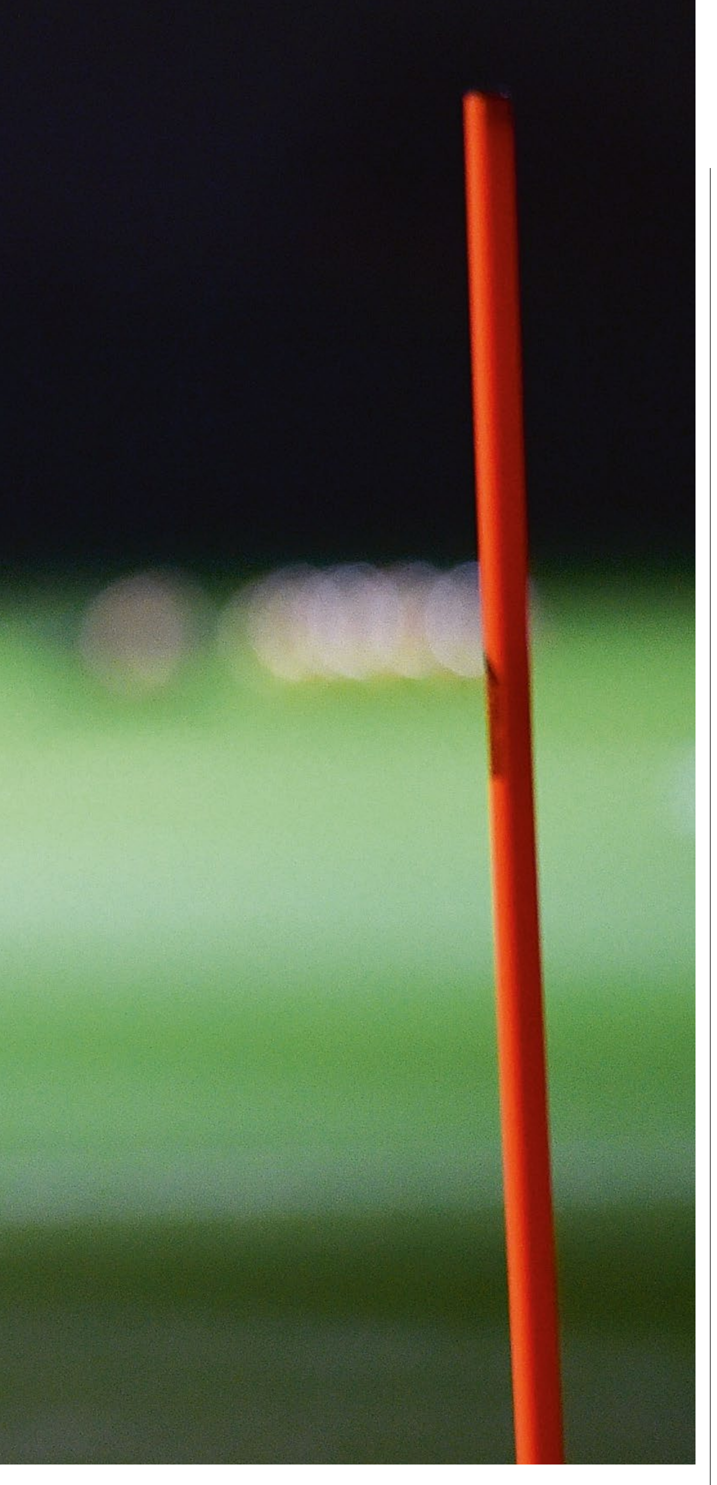
I'm not sure it has anything to do with 'extra responsibility'. I've always taken defeat badly and feel responsible, regardless of wearing an armband. Playing for Liverpool certainly brings extra responsibility because playing for this club brings higher expectation and that's how it should be, to be honest. We all want to be competing for trophies and winning, so when you lose it hurts.

But I think sometimes it's how you lose, or how the result comes about, that impacts how you feel. So, Spurs and Sevilla were really hard to stomach because of the circumstances of how the result came about. But we all feel like that. It's not just me, it's the entire team. It's about reaction after that: how you channel that feeling and what you do in the aftermath.

I think we've shown we're a team that reacts in the right way and that's a positive for us. We're incredibly close-knit as well as a group. We care about each other and believe in each other. That's massive and I think it plays a big part when you have to bounce back from a set-back. Fortunately in the last couple of seasons we haven't had too many set-backs because results and performances have been decent.

As captain you always have to look for the positives...

I think you have a responsibility to think about more than just yourself. That's what I learned from the best captains I played with. As I said earlier, I've always taken defeat personally and been very self-critical after a bad



result or a bad performance. As a captain of a team I think you have to look at how it's affected other people as well and maybe there comes with it more responsibility to 'front up' and take the flack.

I don't mind that – there is nothing anyone can say to me after a loss that would make me feel worse than I already do in that moment. If being captain means you're the one that stands there after a game and takes it on the chin for the team I'll always raise my hand to do that. I see that as part of my responsibilities. This is a fantastic dressing-room, though, and a positive dressing-room and a dressing-room that believes in itself and in each other. That has a big impact.

Generally the team has been strong at Anfield, conceding far less than on its travels – why do you think that is?

We've been very good at home this season and very dominant. We have away as well, but of course if you have a couple of high-profile losses and dramatic losses people can focus on that area and say it's a problem. Like the gaffer says, we create the situation where people can talk about it, so it's on us to stop it as a talking-point as well.

Anfield was massive for us last season and I think if you look at any successful team they tend to make their home ground a fortress. I think we give our supporters performances to be proud of at home and I like that. I like that coming to Anfield is difficult for opposition teams – it absolutely should be. But we've had big away wins as well. It's not easy winning at Leicester, West Ham, Stoke and Brighton, plus we played a Champions League qualifier and three Champions League group matches on the road and not lost. So I think this side has proved it can produce away as well as at home.

One of the highlights during the first few months of the season has been the incredible form of Mo Salah...

He's been brilliant. He is so quick, he seems quicker with the ball which is strange! He's so quick that he's hard to tackle in training. He's scoring goals, working hard for the team, assisting, creating chances...he's doing everything at the minute and he's been a big influence on the team since he's come in and hopefully he can just continue to keep on like that.

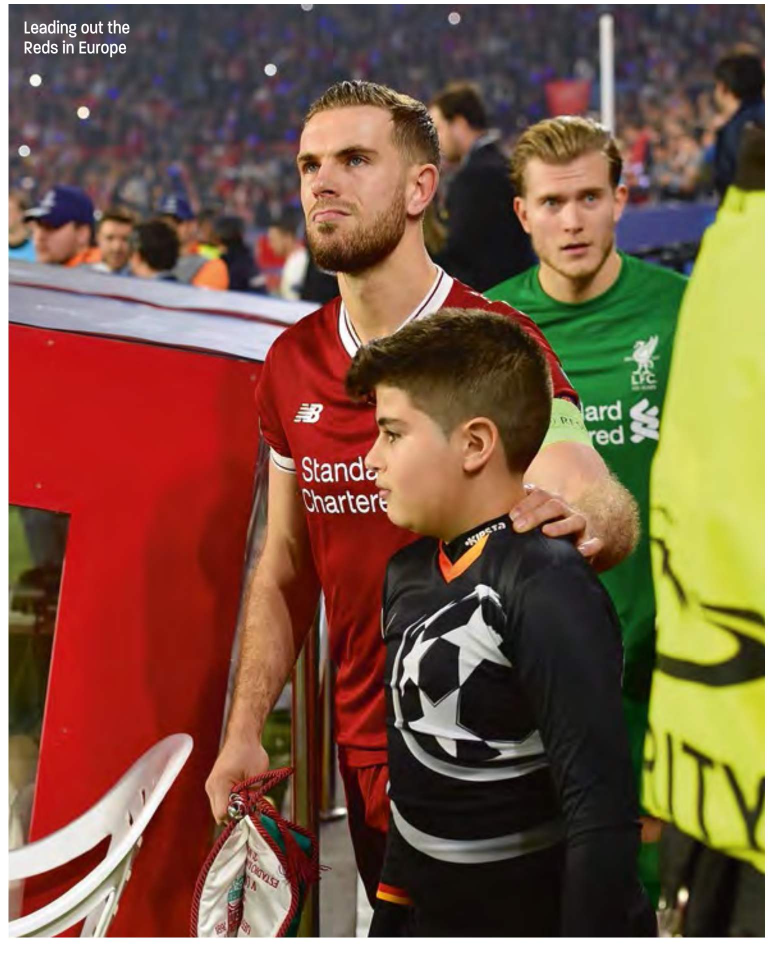
Am I surprised by how quickly he's settled? Yes and no. Obviously coming to Liverpool it's a huge club and sometimes it takes a little time to settle in, but at the same time he's played for big clubs before such as Chelsea and Roma. He's played in the Premier League too so he knew what it was all about and I think that experience has helped him a lot over the last few months. He's used all of that and he's been phenomenal.

What's he like off the pitch?

He's very happy all the time, always smiling and that rubs off on people. He's a genuine, nice person.

He's great to have around off the field. I know not everybody sees that – they just see what's happening on the pitch – but off it he's fantastic around the lads and, like I say, he's an experienced player. He's played at the highest level in terms of the Champions League, Premier League, Serie A. He's played in big games and he's a big player for us.

He's certainly used his career experiences to motivate himself and give him that little bit extra. He's


Leading out the Reds in Europe





On target in the win
at Leicester City

Team talk with the boss and Mignolet

certainly done that because when he went to Roma he was fantastic and obviously now he's started brilliantly at Liverpool too. Like I say, hopefully he can continue that on for a long time.

You scored in the win at Leicester City in September, taking your LFC tally to 24...

I used to score a few more but not too many more! I suppose my role has changed within the team since my earlier seasons at the club so maybe that's a factor, I'm not sure.

It's different now. I've got to be a lot more disciplined and think about what my job is for the team rather than what I more naturally might want to do in the sense of getting in the box and scoring goals. I've got to think differently but as long as other people like Mo Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane are getting the goals, that's fine. It doesn't really matter who scores as long as we win.

Can Manchester City be caught at the top of the Premier League table?

Yes of course they can, but it's not really something that's relevant to talk about. We get to play them twice in a season and that's the time we can impact on them and their form directly. The rest of the time all we can do is keep on winning and take the most points possible.

I know that sounds like stating the obvious but it is the case. It would be dangerous to focus on City, or any other team for that matter. The only two teams who should matter to us are ourselves and the next opponent we face on a match day. Other than that, I'm not interested in other teams.

The busy December/January months are always important in helping to shape a season...

We've started the month well but yes, it's massive for us with so many points up for grabs. I think this month



will show just how strong our squad is and just how good the players we have are.

The gaffer has already made changes for games and the lads who have come in have produced. That will be the key thing in December and January. When you have players who take their opportunity when it comes their way, you are going to be in a good place.

I look at our squad and can see every player making a strong case to start come matchday – that's brilliant, keeps us all on our toes and keeps us sharp. This month it's about being strong mentally and physically and making sure the attitude is always spot-on. I think if we all have the right attitude, the quality in our team will take care of the rest.

This is your seventh season at Liverpool and you've captained club and country – are you satisfied with your footballing journey so far?

I don't think you're ever satisfied. Maybe you think about things like that when your career is over, but in the here-and-now all that matters is winning for Liverpool, and when on international duty for England.

I've spoken at the start of this that no one is more critical of me than I am myself – and that means I'm always looking to improve as a player. I think at this level and at a club like Liverpool even staying the same means you go backwards.

Our squad gets better and better every season and the quality of the Premier League and the Champions League gets better every season. You have to get better with it or it will leave you behind.

A quick word on England: you were unbeaten in qualifying for next summer's World Cup finals...

I think we've done very well in qualification. We've got a lot of good players and it was great to see Joe Gomez and Dominic Solanke make their debuts in last month's friendlies.

I think if you look at the last couple of performances we've looked solid defensively so that gives us something to build on as a team going into Russia. There's still a long way to go and there's a lot we can work on, but of course as players we feel as though we can go there and do something that people may not expect.

You're one of a number of players who have captained England this year – does it matter who wears the armband?

Not really. The manager's changed it a few times to give people more responsibility within the team. I think that's a brilliant idea because you don't need just one leader or one captain, you need four or five in your team if you want to achieve anything. I think that's worked really well for the squad and will put us in good stead going into Russia.

Finally, back to yourself and Liverpool: what can you improve in your game and as a team?

Everything. We can improve on everything all the time, whether that's scoring goals, defending, counter-pressing, counter-attacking. I feel that these are all things we can always improve. Of course there are some things we are better at, but even those still need improvement.

What we do on the training pitch is geared towards improving in every area that we possibly can. The manager wants progression and to see us building on last season and making sure we're a horrible team to play against.

When we're at it and 100 per cent flying I think we'd give anybody a game. It's about maintaining that level for the majority of the season and if we can do that then I'm sure we can finish in a good position.



Team talk with the boss and Kane

Keeper captain

Reds goalie Simon Mignolet on his pride in wearing the armband when called upon


I GOT A TEXT FROM THE MANAGER AND THOUGHT : WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO AS SKIPPER?
Standard Chartered
L.F.C.
125 YEARS
WESTERN UNION
Captain



Standard Chartered
new balance
WESTERN UNION WU
BETVICTOR
new balance

Tia Hellebaut may not be a name you are familiar with if you don't follow athletics, but she holds a unique place in Belgium's Olympic Games history.

In the 2008 summer Olympics in China she became the first-ever Belgian woman to win an athletics gold medal when she cleared 2.05m in the high jump, stunning Croatian world champion Blanka Vlasic, the favourite to win.

Four years and two pregnancies later, Hellebaut travelled to London to defend her title after being appointed flag-bearer by her country, essentially the Olympic equivalent of captaincy. And so, on 27 July 2012, she became the first Belgian to lead a team out inside the brand spanking new London Stadium, carrying the black-yellow-red tricolour around the running track during an opening ceremony that featured James Bond – aka the LFC-supporting Daniel Craig – jumping out of a helicopter with HRH Queen Elizabeth II. As you do.

I'M ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO LIKES TO BE LOUD AND GIVE INSTRUCTIONS WHEN I CAN

Half-a-decade later and while there was no sign of 007 or British royalty parachuting into the venue before Liverpool's Premier League visit to West Ham, there was another Belgian leading a team out onto the pitch.

Simon Mignolet was LFC's surprise captain when the Reds took on the Hammers last month. With skipper Jordan Henderson ruled out through injury on the morning of the game and vice-captain James Milner only named as substitute, Jürgen Klopp needed a stand-in and opted for Mignolet. And, before anyone thinks describing the 29-year-old goalkeeper as a 'surprise captain' is in any way disparaging, it should be pointed out that there was nobody more surprised than Mignolet himself!

"I wasn't expecting it!" he says with a grin during a Monday morning post-breakfast chat down at Melwood. "Hendo was injured and Milly was on the bench, but I hadn't thought that it was going to be me who would be captain."

How did he find out about his new responsibility? In typical 2017 fashion, of course, through the use of modern



technology. "I received a text from the team manager before the game saying 'you are the captain for today'. At that moment in time I thought: oh my God, what do I have to do now? Because I'd never done it before!

"When you are captain there all kinds of little things you have to do like go into the dressing-room with the referees before the game, procedural things you never think about until you have to do it. It meant I had to change my normal preparation and my usual routine.

"As keepers we normally go out earlier than the other players to warm up because we need a bit more time, but it is in that period when the captain has to go in to see the referee, so my warm-up was shorter than usual. We dealt with it, though, and it brought good luck because we won 4-1 at West Ham, which is a difficult place to go."

Over the last 125 years it has been something of a rarity for keepers to captain Liverpool. According to online stats bible lfchistory.net, Harry Storer, from 1898-99, is the only goalie to have been appointed as club captain in LFC's entire history. But other keepers have led the Reds out in the absence of their usual skipper.

I'M ONLY 29 BUT I LOOK AROUND OUR DRESSING ROOM AND SEE I'M ONE OF THE OLDER ONES

In addition to Storer captaining Liverpool on 32 occasions, Pepe Reina skippered the Reds 26 times, Jerzy Dudek wore the armband in four matches, Matt McQueen three times, Ray Clemence was captain twice and Elisha Scott once.

LFC captaincy records are not 100 per cent complete – it's also difficult trying to ascertain when an armband was first physically worn – but it gives more than a snapshot of how irregular it is for a keeper to take the pre-match coin-toss. It also leads to the old question of whether Mignolet believes goalkeepers make good captains, given they are naturally the furthest player away from the action when their team is attacking.

"I'm always someone who likes to communicate and give some leadership to the defence the best I can from my position," he replies. "It's not always easy when the team is attacking but I try to organise things on set-pieces and I try to be loud and give instructions. Maybe that's the reason why the gaffer gave me the armband.

"So I think goalkeepers can make good captains for these reasons. You see everything in front of you and get a certain idea of the game that the other players don't.

"There are obviously different kinds of leadership when you are in the dressing-room, but also your age makes a difference.

"Although I'm only 29, which is a young age for a keeper, I look around our dressing-room and see I am one of the older lads in the squad. I'm not quite a veteran yet! But sometimes I feel that way with some of the young boys like Trent coming into the team at such a young age."

Evidently he did a good job at West Ham as when the Reds subsequently went to Stoke at the end of November it was Mignolet who wore the armband again and this time he kept a clean-sheet in a 3-0 win.

Winter training at Melwood





Mignolet
Can
Robertson
MIGNOLET
22
EMRE CAN
23
SOLANKE
22

It should be pointed out that the Belgian international didn't finish either game as captain – Milner against the Hammers, and Henderson against the Potters, taking over when coming on. But retaining his place in the team rather than leading his team-mates out is far more of a focus for a player who is now closing in on his 200th appearance for the Reds.

Liverpool boss Klopp has rotated his keepers in 2017/18 with Simon playing in the Premier League, Loris Karius wearing the gloves in the Champions League and Danny Ward in the Carabao Cup. I ask Mignolet, who recently won his 20th cap for Belgium, if not playing in every game has taken time to adjust to?

"As a professional football player you always want to play as many games as you can, to stay in a routine and always be on the pitch. The manager makes decisions in favour of the team and what he thinks best for the team at that moment in time.

"Just like any other player in the dressing-room I have to adapt to that. Of course I would like to play every single game, but I think these days it's not how it is going to be anymore."

OF COURSE I'D LIKE TO PLAY IN EVERY GAME BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S POSSIBLE THESE DAYS

It's a pragmatic response from a man who realises there is strong competition for his place and admits it is difficult to assess to what extent – if any – rotating keepers can have on consistency, rhythm and form.

"I don't know," he says without hesitation. "It's difficult to say because you don't know what would have been if you'd played. It's all ifs and buts, but playing in every game does make it easier to get a relationship with the defence and get the consistency that you can only get by playing all the time."

As for Tia Hellebaut, in case you're wondering she finished fifth in the 2012 high jump, technically making Mignolet the most successful Belgian leader to have appeared at the London Stadium. Although to be fair to the now-retired 39-year-old she had to get over a bar all by herself, whereas Mignolet and Liverpool had Mo Salah, Joel Matip and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain showing they know how to put a ball underneath it...

Words: Chris McLoughlin



LIVERPOOL FC'S GOALKEEPING CAPTAINS


Clem


Matt


Pepe


Harry



Simon


Elisha


Jerzy

	APPEARANCES	GAMES AS CAPTAIN
Harry Storer	121	32
Pepe Reina	394	26
Jerzy Dudek	186	4
Matt McQueen+	103	3
Ray Clemence	665	2
Simon Mignolet	195	2
Elisha Scott	468	1

*Stats courtesy of lfchistory.net and correct as of 30/11/17 +Matt McQueen made 45 apps as a keeper and 58 as an outfield player! He was in goal for each of his three games as captain, all in December 1895.

TOMORROW'S

Becky Flaherty and Ellie Fletcher in North Liverpool



Laura Coombs and Caroline Weir at Walton Park

Members of the Liverpool Ladies were out in force throughout the community last month as they gave their backing to the FA's Girls' Football Week.

The annual initiative aims to encourage more girls to take up and continue to play football. Handing out free tickets to the home clash with Birmingham City Ladies, a whole host of Scott Rogers' squad were out and about to support one of the biggest events in the women's football calendar.

The series of visits started with goalkeeper Becky Flaherty and defender Ellie Fletcher dropping in to North Liverpool Academy, before England international defenders Alex Greenwood and Casey Stoney stopped by at Frodsham Leisure Club to spend time with young fans.

Liverpool captain Gemma Bonner and her England colleague, goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain, then headed to Cowley International College while midfield duo Laura

WORLD TODAY

Ladies help spread the word: women's football wants to find the next generation



Coombs and Caroline Weir looked in on the Liverpool Girls Festival in Walton Park.

Defenders Amy Turner and Martha Harris also delighted young fans when they made an appearance at the Anfield Sports Community Centre before Ali Johnson and Ashley Hodson attended the Knowsley, St Helens & Halton Girls Festival at Prescot Soccer Centre.

The week-long programme concluded with a series of events ahead of the Reds' game against Birmingham which ended in a 1-0 win courtesy of a goal from England youth international Niamh Charles.

Ellie Fletcher said: "It was fantastic to support Girls' Football Week. It's one of the key events in the women's football calendar and hopefully helps to increase participation rates throughout the country."

Meanwhile, talking after her visit to the Liverpool County FA, Scotland international Weir said: "It was great to be able to see so many young girls playing football and, more importantly, enjoying it! If myself and Laura Coombs are able to act as positive role-models to show the girls that they can become professional footballers, then hopefully one day they can follow in our footsteps."

Turner added: "I'm grateful to be a part of Girls Football Week. It's massive for women's football and all the girls were excited to be here.

"There is a huge buzz around women's football at the moment. They have such a wide range of opportunities from all age groups and it's so nice to see so many people getting involved."



Weir is North West's best

Attacking midfielder Caroline Weir was named Women's Player of the Year for 2017 at the North West Football Awards.

The 22-year-old has enjoyed a fantastic year for club and country, top-scoring for Scott Rogers' side in the Spring Series before starring for Scotland at the UEFA Women's European Championships in the Netherlands despite the team's early exit.

Caroline saw off competition from England international Lucy Bronze, Everton Ladies defender Gabby George and Chester Ladies full-back Jamie-Lee McDowell to pick up the award at the ceremony at Emirates Old Trafford, home of Lancashire County Cricket Club.

She said: "It is a real honour to have been named Player of the Year. I would like to thank my team-mates with Liverpool Ladies and Scotland Women for helping me to win this award as without them, winning individual awards such as this wouldn't be possible.

"To see off competition from Lucy, Gabby and Jamie-Lee, who all enjoyed fantastic seasons for their clubs, makes it extra special and highlights how much of a privilege it is to have won this award."



THE WAY WE WERE

The Reds at war and what-might-have-been with Matt Busby – as revealed in this exclusive extract from a fab new book entitled The Red Journey...



WARTIME LIVERPOOL

PHIL TAYLOR: We were in the Infantry unit of the Ninth Kings, and at first we were deployed around Liverpool. I worked on a viaduct on the Liverpool-London railway line with a squad of the rest of our players. It was all the Liverpool players, and we were in bell-tents somewhere in Cheshire. We had to sort of guard this viaduct in case of sabotage.

Tommy Cooper was our sergeant in charge. Good old Tom. There were two quick promotions made. Tom didn't know anything more about the army than the rest of us, but he was our senior so they gave Tom three stripes. The other sergeant was Arthur Riley, the goalkeeper, who had served in South Africa in the conscription days, so he knew a little about army procedure.

MATT BUSBY: It was a tragedy that, among all the Liverpool players who joined the Army as an entire club in 1939, Tommy Cooper became the only fatality...killed on a motor-bicycle in this country.

BOB PAISLEY: My career as a professional with Liverpool had lasted just three months when I was called up. I had played in only two reserve games when the army beckoned. August Bank Holiday 1941 meant a departure for Egypt, and we arrived there after ten weeks at sea.

My first letter from home didn't arrive until it was nearly Christmas – and it was a note from Liverpool manager George Kay, telling me to report to the first game of the season against Preston! When I wrote back to Mr Kay, pointing out my whereabouts, he replied saying how lucky I was and how he wished he could change places with me. I felt the same way, wishing I could change places with him!

BILLY LIDDELL: I wanted to qualify as a pilot but using my aptitude for maths I did so well in navigation that I was posted to the Air Navigation School at Bridgnorth in Shropshire.

I was playing in a friendly scratch game with nothing at stake. We were winning with ease when, just before the end, I stumbled in a hole in the pitch and my ankle gave way. I was taken to hospital and learned I'd broken my leg just above the ankle. When I left hospital I went to the RAF Remedial Centre at Blackpool. After a month at Blackpool I returned to



The post-war Reds: back row Phil Taylor, Bill Jones, Ray Lambert, Cyril Sidlow, Bob Paisley, Eddie Spicer; front row Jimmy Payne, Kevin Baron, Albert Stubbins, Willie Fagan, Billy Liddell

Bridgnorth and was posted to Heaton Park, near Manchester, where we were not allowed out of camp until 4.30pm on Saturdays.

One week, when Liverpool were playing at Manchester City, I applied to get away at midday so I could turn out in the game. My application was refused but I still got to Maine Road. I just hopped over the camp wall when nobody was looking! I linked up with the Liverpool team at the station and went up to the ground in their coach.

BOB PAISLEY: My first derby game against Everton was early in the war, and at that time I was stationed in Tarporley in Cheshire, awaiting a posting abroad. It was a Liverpool Senior Cup final and I was released to play in the game. But the army didn't provide the transport as well as a pass… so I cycled 30 miles to the ground.

The crowd limit was supposed to be 15,000, but an estimated 30,000 saw the match – which Liverpool lost 4-2.

CYRIL DONE: When we were in Leystone some of us played for a works team on a Wednesday, to keep ourselves fit. And you can imagine a works team in Leystone, with players like Matt Busby, Phil Taylor and Jack Balmer. We quite enjoyed it.

BOB PAISLEY: The battery I was in went to the Far East. I should have gone with them but was transferred to another battery because I was the regimental soccer captain. That was a bit of luck because my unit was captured soon after it arrived and spent the rest of the war in a prisoner-of-war camp.

BILLY LIDDELL: Wartime football did not mean long journeys for teams, but it did mean extra work for harassed managers.

With players in the forces stationed all over the country, Mr Kay wrote thousands of letters and must have spent many hours on the phone to commanding officers.

Such was his personality that his own players and guest players would willingly make long journeys to play for the Reds. They helped to keep football going and the government said that in their view football was doing a service to the country in maintaining morale.

CYRIL DONE: We were in the entertainment business and obviously people in Britain wanted entertaining as much as possible. I think the powers-that-be thought it was good for the people of Merseyside that we should keep playing our game, the same as entertainers should carry on with their business.


1948-9
Liverpool F.C. Season 1939-40
TOP ROW.—McInnes, Taylor, Harley, Kemp, Bush, Rams..., Tom Cooper.
BOTTOM ROW.—Nieuwenhuys, Fagan, Matt Busby (Ca...), Balmer, Van Den Berg.
Photograph is produced by courtesy of 'Topical Times.'
page seven



Bob Paisley

POST-WAR LIVERPOOL

LAURIE HUGHES: The country yearned for top-class football and nowhere was it more eagerly anticipated than in the city of Liverpool.

For six long years Everton fans had all the bragging rights in the town. Merseyside was such an upbeat place back then, despite the horrors of war. Gradually things were turning back to normal, and that meant regular football. The game meant so much and to have it back brought a spring to the city's step. It got everyone going. After all, what else was there?

As the season approached I remember just how excited the public were at the prospect of First Division action. There was a real buzz about the place. For our part, we were all just so glad to be back doing what we loved best: playing football and playing it competitively around the country.

The city had been devastated by the sustained bombing of the Germans and it would take years to build it up again, but in the meantime, us footballers could hopefully put a smile back on the faces of our fellow Liverpudlians.

EDDIE SPICER: In those days I never used to think about the money, and I don't think the other players did. They were just proud of playing for Liverpool. They were better off than if they had a job digging holes in the road or building houses. They were getting more money, and they were enjoying what they were doing.

LAURIE HUGHES: I don't think the players realised the amount of money they should have been getting. I never thought of it. I just wanted to enjoy my football which I did do, and get the rewards, which I thought at that particular time were good.

CYRIL DONE: If you went by bus or tram, you never paid. The conductor wouldn't take the money. It became embarrassing on certain occasions.

STAN PALK: Most of our training was done on the pitch at Anfield, that's why there was never any grass on it by Christmas. During the winter months when the pitch was covered in snow or the rain was falling heavily we used to run up and down the steps of the Kop.



Cyril Done

Albert Shelley and Jimmy Seddon were the trainers back then. We'd train every morning between 10 and 12, unless you'd played on the Saturday. In that case you'd have the Monday off. There was none of this warming-up on the pitch before a match like they do now. We'd just run out for the kick-off and get on with it.

Anfield was mostly standing back then and held about sixty-odd thousand. The atmosphere was great and it was a privilege to play in front of such knowledgeable fans.

LAURIE HUGHES: We had a great spirit, a workaholic manager and, most importantly, some very good players. Liverpool had kept many of its key pre-war stars but sadly lost the great Matt Busby. No matter, ours was a squad good enough, we hoped, to challenge the best of them.



SPECIAL "V" EDITION
AFTER 5 Years, 8 Months, 4 Days

Liverpool Echo

MARKING ONE OF THE GREATEST DAYS IN BRITAIN'S HISTORY

WAR IN EUROPE IS OVER

Dramatic Announcement From Allied H.Q.

MATT BUSBY'S INFLUENCE

BILLY LIDDELL: Matt was a wonderful help on the field. You could hardly do other than play well with him behind you, while off the field he was a constant source of good advice and valuable hints.

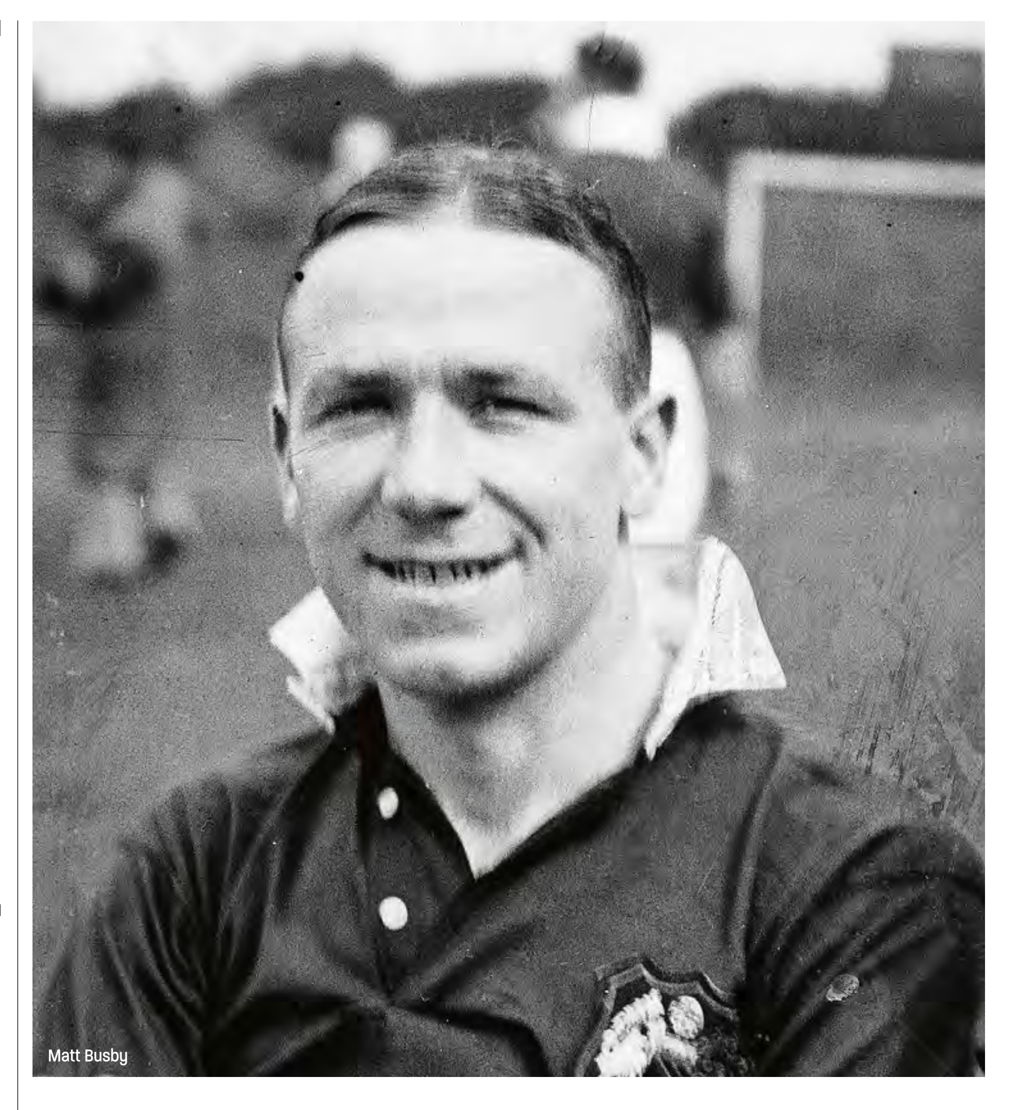
PHIL TAYLOR: I must admit that I like to see a bit of style in a player – I tried to copy the likes of Matt Busby, who was an idol of mine for many years, and for a spell I played in the same side as Matt.

BILLY LIDDELL: Matt Busby was never a robust player although he had all the physical attributes. He never needed to use them because his ball-control and distribution were second to none, while his positioning was such that he was always right in the game, without ever seeming to exert himself.

PHIL TAYLOR: Matt was a player who played football on the ground. He wasn't a 'big-boot' player. He'd control the ball, bring it forward, bring it inside, more to the centre, and his left foot would go and the ball would go between the full-backs for Nieuwenhuys to run on to. You were looking for these things all the time and I tried to get myself doing the same thing later on.

BOB PAISLEY: I was deeply impressed by Matt Busby...a man you could look up to and respect. He'd played the game and people like him weren't solely tied down with tactics, which was a valuable lesson for me.

LAURIE HUGHES: Matt Busby was a nice fella, decent. We both loved the horses, so sometimes we'd go to the racing. Matt lived in Crosby, I was in Waterloo, so we'd come home on the bus together.


Matt Busby



As hostilities drew to a close Liverpool's revered pre-war captain contemplated his future in the game. The best years of his playing career behind him and, aged 36, he had a big decision to make...

MATT BUSBY: Liverpool were very keen to retain my services as a coach, and it seemed their offer of a five years' contract with the probability of promotion during that time, provided me with my main requirement... security. I agreed verbally to accept, but before signing a contract had a chat with the directors so as to leave no doubt in their minds that my hopes in soccer were centred on a managerial job, despite my keenness on coaching.

The directors' plan was that, besides coaching, I could take some of the weight off George Kay. I was considering this offer, when quite unexpectedly I was informed that Mr JW Gibson, then chairman of Manchester United, would like to see me. The sequel was that his club offered me the manager's position at Old Trafford, providing me with the opening I'd been seeking. When I told the Liverpool directors of my decision, they did not take it very well...

The Red Journey: An Oral History of Liverpool Football Club is curated by Mark Platt and told in the words of the people who made LFC a world institution. Published by deCoubertin and out now priced £25.





Neil Mellor

Salah's excellence also raises the performance of his team-mates

Mo Salah has made an unbelievably good start to his Liverpool career. Seventeen goals in 22 games is a phenomenal return for someone who has never experienced playing for such a big football club before. Yes, he had a short spell at Chelsea and found himself as a player with AS Roma, but playing for Liverpool is on another level.

A couple of key things have helped him settle in, not least how appreciated he is by Jürgen Klopp – who made him a big part of his team immediately – and Liverpool supporters, who were quickly aware of his qualities.

Another important factor is that Salah was signed early and had a full pre-season with Liverpool. A year earlier Sadio Mane settled in quickly because he also arrived at the start of the summer and I can't overstate how important this is.

If you go away on any pre-season trip as a first-team Liverpool player to Asia, America, Australia or wherever, you become aware of how big this football club is. You may see it from a distance, but let me tell you from my own experience that the receptions you get from Liverpool supporters across the world stays with you.

Of course it also means there is more time to be integrated into the team and while I don't think anybody expected Salah to perform to the goalscoring level he has so far, it is a credit to the way he has adapted to playing for Liverpool.

Salah netted 19 goals in 41 games for AS Roma last season. No disrespect to Serie A, but the Premier League is the most competitive in the world. Salah isn't a striker or a recognised natural goalscorer but has been out-scoring some of the best strikers in the world because his pace makes him such a threat and his manager plays a brand of counter-attacking football that suits him.

In Mane, Firmino and Coutinho he also has a supply-line to maximise his attributes and his form will give them all a little nudge. Top forwards are selfish and they will all want to get the headlines Salah's been commanding.

Luis Suarez, Cristiano Ronaldo and Alan Shearer hold the Premier League record for scoring the most goals, 31, in a 38-game season. Can Salah beat it? The way he's going he could, but there is a lot of football between now and the end of the season with the World Cup still to come.

Klopp is managing him shrewdly – he got a breather against Stoke but scored twice when brought on – and at Brighton he was effective without scoring, so it's a big ask to score more than 30 goals even if he stays fit. The 5-1 win at Brighton also showed how much he is feared.

For Liverpool's second goal, scored by Firmino, four defenders were attracted to Salah when he broke through the middle, creating space for Coutinho and Firmino to combine. His reputation is growing and his pace is scaring defenders who don't know whether to drop off or hunt him down in packs.

I thought that Liverpool were over-reliant on Mane last season for pace and missed him when he was unavailable but with Salah in the team, Coutinho in top form and Firmino benefiting from playing alongside them we're seeing a hugely exciting side. Earlier in the season there was a sense of frustration because a lot of goalscoring chances weren't being taken, but now the goals have been flying in. The next step is winning things.

Realistically, it will be hard to stop Man City from winning the league, but we're still in Europe and now have an FA Cup third-round tie with Everton to look forward to.

It's a tough draw. I'd rather be playing a lower-league side straight after the hectic Christmas schedule. Being at home is a positive, given how well Liverpool have been performing at Anfield, but there are so many games between now and January that it's impossible to know how both teams will be going into the match. Injuries will be a factor and all it takes is for a couple of key players to be missing and a cup-tie like Liverpool v Everton can have a completely different complexion.

If Liverpool's players can take the same form, confidence and entertaining football into January as they did into December ,then beating Everton would be a great way to start an FA Cup run. But there's a lot of football to play first.

Follow Neil on Twitter **@NeilMellor33**.



Mo's bringing out the best in everyone

Liverpool fans snapped with the European Cup at a special Red Neighbours event. Who did LFC defeat to lift the trophy for the first time in 1977?

Answer on page 98

All the latest news as the club and its players strive to make a difference on and off the pitch

CLUB





ANFIELD'S ALL-ROUNDER

James Milner shows off his sports skills at a sports camp – get him in the Ashes side quick!





Liverpool vice-captain James Milner recently visited an LFC Foundation half-term multi-sport camp in Anfield – and demonstrated his sporting prowess into the bargain.

The midfielder popped in to Anfield Sports & Community Centre to meet young participants and see first-hand how they are benefiting from the sessions, which were funded by a generous donation from his own charity.

After chatting to the youngsters and answering their questions, James also tried his hand at the numerous activities on offer – including dodgeball, cricket, hockey and rugby.

The James Milner Foundation (JMF) provided the club's charity, the LFC Foundation, with £16,000 last year, and the money was used to fund a series of three-day multi-sports and activity camps during school half-term breaks.

The camps began back in October 2016 and aim to encourage children aged six to 15 years to participate in healthy recreation, with over 540 participants benefiting from the sessions to date.

Like the LFC Foundation, JMF promotes healthy activities among young people across the UK by focusing on the development, improvement and provision of sporting opportunities, in particular football, rugby and cricket.







The James Milner Foundation aims to promote healthy recreation for the benefit of young people in the UK by the development, improvement and provision of opportunities in sports like football, rugby and cricket. It also endeavours to assist in the preservation of health and the advancement of education among young people in need.


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A NEW ANFIELD ENVIROMENT

Reds launch special venue for people with sensory needs to experience games live

Liverpool FC has launched a new sensory room at Anfield for fans to access on matchdays.

Based in the Kenny Dalglish Stand, it comprises a range of specialist equipment and has been created to enable people with a sensory need such as autism to experience football matches in a comfortable environment suitable for their needs. Some of the newly-purchased portable equipment includes a sensory portable bubble tube and light unit, fibre optic carpet, a projector and an LED bean bag.

The new facility was made possible by funding from the Premier League and BT who, working with the Shippey Campaign, want to encourage the creation of sensory rooms at all Premier League clubs. This followed the successful introduction of a sensory room at Sunderland in 2015/16 which enabled Nathan Shippey, who has autism, to experience football matches in a comfortable and appropriate environment.

Liverpool are the fourth top-flight club to open a sensory room and utilise the funding of specialist equipment from the Premier League and BT.

Simon Thornton, the club's diversity and inclusion officer, says: "We are delighted to have officially launched our new sensory room which has been in development for a while. We are committed to being as inclusive and accessible as possible and we believe that this new facility provides more of our fans with the opportunity to experience watching a live game at Anfield.

"I would like to thank Autism Together for their advice and guidance on our new facility and the Premier League and BT for their generous donation, which has made this project possible."

Yvonne Crowhurst, head of charity Autism Together's Autism Training & Advisory Service, adds: "It's fantastic to have such an iconic institution as Liverpool FC on board as an Autism Champion. It really means something when the big names show they're listening to the autism community.

"One in every hundred people in Liverpool are on the autism spectrum and it's our job to make sure this city shows they are accepted and gives them a warm welcome whether they're using public transport, taking in a film, eating out, shopping or going to a game.

"The team at Anfield have demonstrated that small changes can make a huge difference to people on the spectrum. The sensory room will mean that people with autism can watch a game in their own way in a quieter, calmer environment.



"I'm sure the box will be visited, over the years, by many people who never thought they'd be able to come to a football match.

"It'll bring them and their families so much joy, and we hope other clubs around the country will follow Liverpool Football Club's lead."

The sensory room is available on a trial basis at a number of games during the remainder of the 2017/18 season. Fans who would like to access the new facility should register their interest via **disability@liverpoolfc.com**.

Depending on demand for the facility, a rota will be established among registered supporters to ensure it's made available to as many LFC fans as possible.


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BAYERN LARGE!

March means legends at Anfield – and next year it's the Reds versus Bavaria's finest

The club's official charity, Liverpool FC Foundation, has announced that it will stage its second official legends game at Anfield next year.

This time around the Liverpool FC Legends will take on the legends of Bayern Munich on Saturday 24 March 2018, in aid of the LFC Foundation. The game will see Liverpool FC ambassador Robbie Fowler captain the Reds, while LFC's all-time leading scorer Ian Rush will act as player-manager.

He will lead an array of stars like Steven Gerrard, Jamie Carragher, Luis Garcia, Dirk Kuyt Ian Rush, Gary McAllister, Patrik Berger, Jerzy Dudek, Jason McAteer, Vladimir Smicer, John Aldridge, John Arne Riise and David James – and the return of Xabi Alonso who will play for both sides.

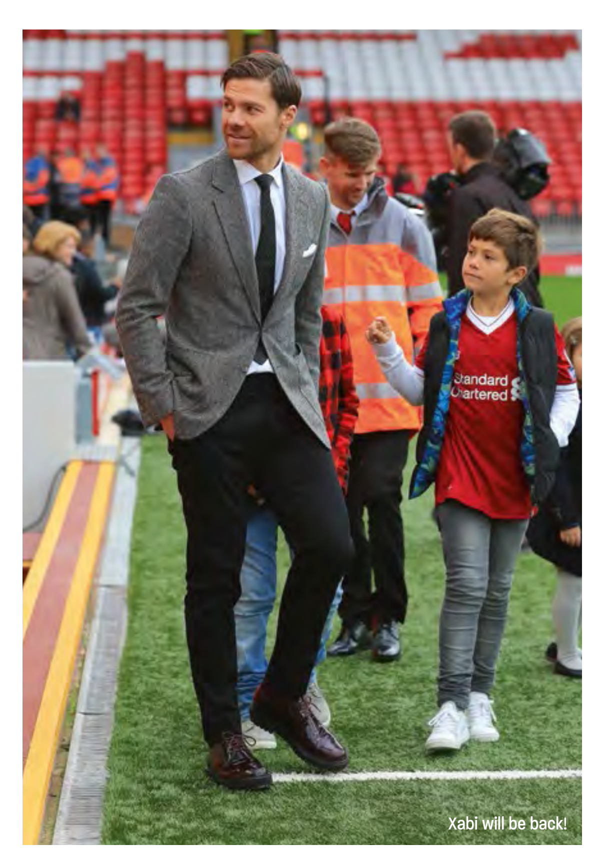
The Bayern team will also feature a top line-up including Giovane Elber, Bixente Lizarazu, Owen Hargreaves, Luca Toni and Martin Demichelis.

Ninety-per-cent of the proceeds from the match will go to the LFC Foundation and support the charity's programmes and partnerships. The remaining 10 per cent of the money raised will be donated to Bayern Munich's charity, FC Bayern Hilfe e.V.

Last year's game versus Real Madrid has helped to fund a variety projects for the LFC Foundation and their charity partners with many more still in the pipeline, including projects with IntoUniversity and Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

Fowler says: "After the success of the first official legends game we are really looking forward to playing Bayern Munich legends next year. We hope to create another fun, entertaining yet competitive game for all our fans while helping to raise funds for the club's official charity."

Andrea Cooper, head of the LFC Foundation, added: "Our fans were so supportive last year and helped us to raise over £1m. This year we hope to create another fantastic family event and with the help again of our fans to raise funds that we can use to make a positive difference to thousands of children and young people across Merseyside and beyond." Tickets are priced at £20 for adults, £5 for juniors and £15 for over 65s and are now on general sale from **www.liverpoolfc.com/tickets/tickets-availability.**



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PUTTING OTHERS FIRST

Foundation and Red Neighbours initiatives see players and legends making a difference



Simon and Gini with local pupils

First-teamers calling in with Anfield match tickets for local schoolchildren, an LFC legend inviting families to a special breakfast, and King Kenny helping with foodbank donations... It's all been happening recently as part of the club's Red Neighbours initiative.

Simon Mignolet and Gini Wijnaldum handed out free tickets for the Premier League match against Chelsea to pupils from New Park, Pinehurst and St Margaret's, as part of the Red Neighbours focus on creating memorable experiences for young people.

Over 1,000 free tickets will be donated to local schools during the 2017/18 campaign. Fifty-five tickets are provided for each home game, with 21 primary and four high schools in the L4, L5 and L6 postcodes benefiting across the season.

Meanwhile 120 guests – pupils and their families from Four Oaks, New Park and Whitefield primary schools – were welcomed to the stadium by LFC mascot Mighty Red before enjoying a free half-term breakfast and experiencing the new stadium tour. Robbie Fowler also lent a hand with serving the food, and all of the children were given LFC goodies to take home.

The Red Neighbours programme focuses on four key areas of need in and around the Anfield area – creating memorable







Robbie with breakfast guests













Peter Moore drops off foodbank donations


Satara at the ASCC









experiences for young people; food poverty and education; support for the elderly community and encouraging a physically active community.

During October the focus was food poverty and education, and Red Neighbours continues to support the Fans Supporting Foodbanks initiative and hosts foodbank collections at all Liverpool FC home games.

Ahead of the home game with Huddersfield Town a record 728.6kg of food was collected by volunteers and LFC staff – the equivalent of 64 three-day food-parcels, providing more than 2,000 meals to help feed approximately 250 people in crisis in the L4, L5 and L6 areas.

Kenny Dalglish helped to kick off the donations by making a contribution to the North Liverpool Foodbank. He joined club CEO Peter Moore and a number of LFC employees who assisted volunteers to help prepare the food parcels.

November then saw Liverpool Ladies star Satara Murray drop by Anfield Sports & Community Centre to meet participants of LFC Foundation's Respect 4 All programme. The American-born defender spent time with the youngsters, who all have additional needs, before joining in with activities provided by Foundation coaches.

The Foundation has two Respect 4 All Centres, one in Anfield, the other on the Wirral, both of which deliver free impairment-specific coaching to young people and adults with complex additional needs.

Andrea Cooper, head of LFC Foundation, said: "Respect 4 All is a fantastic programme which gives participants the chance to be involved in sport when they may not have had the opportunity before. It's great to have Satara here to meet the young people and get involved in some of the activities – the participants were delighted."









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(A10062) **£5**



LARGE SINGLE CHRISTMAS CARD (A10074) **£3**



CHOCOLATE SANTA (A10023) **£2**



QUIZ ANSWERS: LIVERPOOL p9: Liverpool's groundsman for those 54 years from 1928 to 1982 was Arthur Riley; **FOOTBALL p25:** Mohamed Salah reached 10 Premier League goals for Liverpool in his 13th appearance, matching the figure set by Daniel Sturridge in 2012/13; **CLUB p81:** Liverpool defeated Borussia Moenchengladbach 3-1 in Rome in 1977 to win the first of the club's five European Cups.


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